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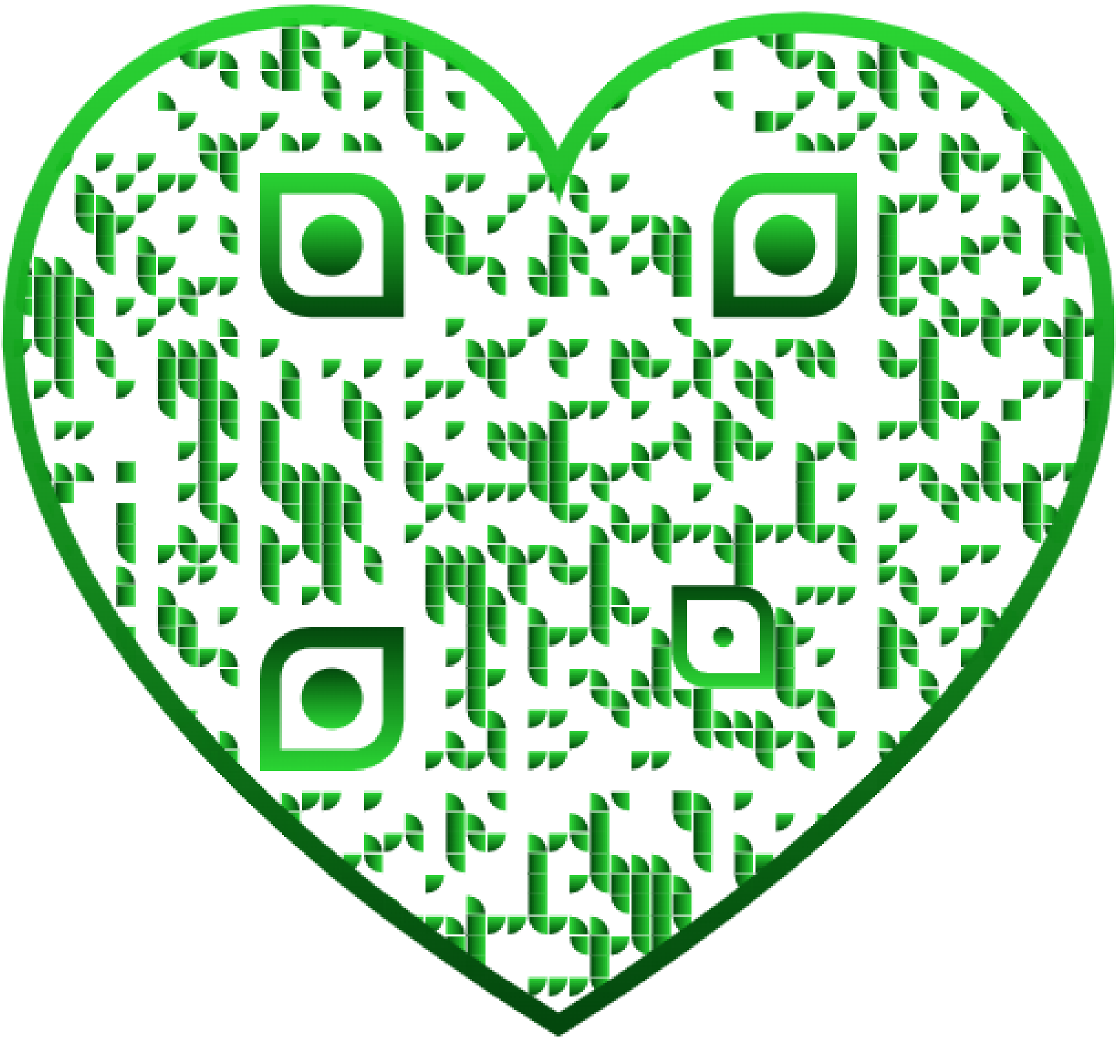

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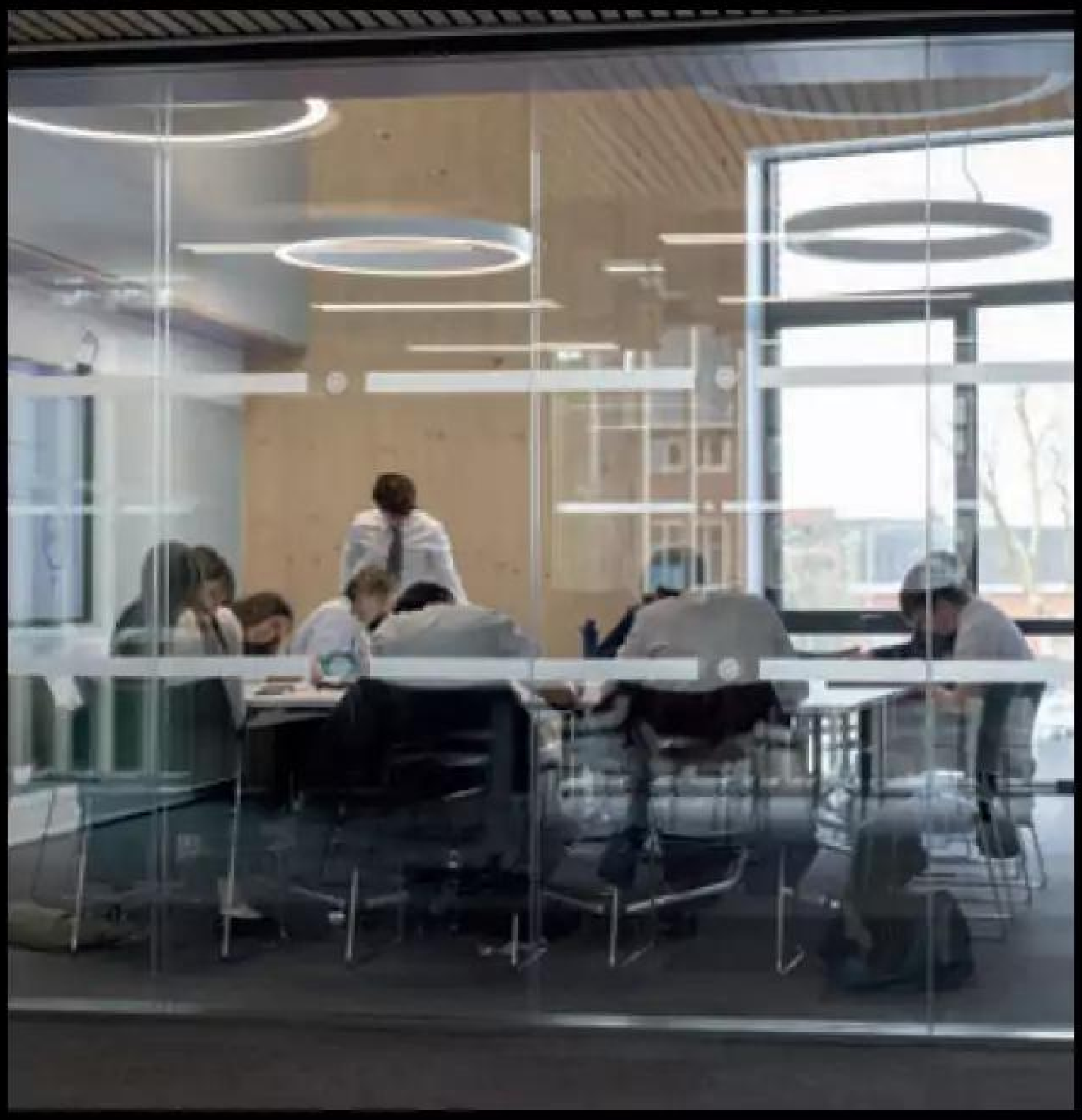

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EDITORS
Libby Norman
Pendle Harte

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER
Nicola Owens

MEDIA CONSULTANTS
Anna Clarke, Steve Playfoot

ART DIRECTOR
Pawel Kuba

SENIOR DESIGNER
Suzette Scoble

MIDWEIGHT DESIGNER
Carmen Graham

MAGAZINE DESIGNER
Mariana Suzuki

MARKETING MANAGER
Jessica Shaltout

FINANCE DIRECTOR
Jerrie Koleci

DIRECTOR
James Fuschillo
Craig Davies

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
Sherif Shaltout

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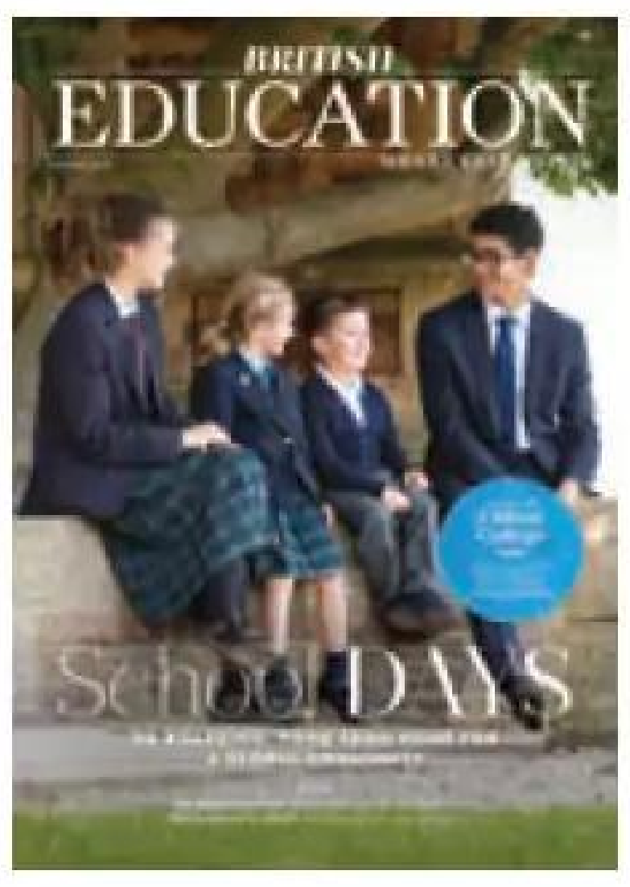

FRONT COVER

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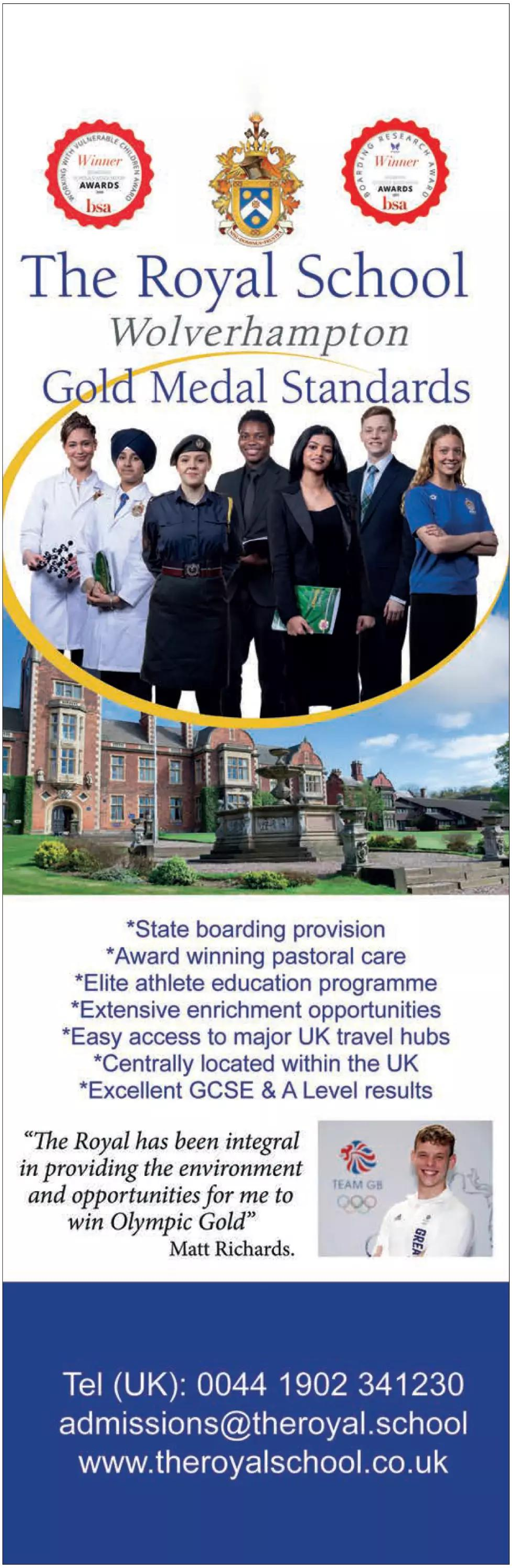
From the EDITOR

Sending children to boarding schools in the UK offers a range of benefits that extend beyond academics. Certainly, UK boarding schools are renowned for their rigorous curricula, strong teaching standards, and excellent university preparation, helping students gain entry into leading global institutions. But there are softer advantages too. One is is language development: being immersed in an English-speaking environment enables students to achieve fluency and confidence very quickly. Boarding school also fosters independence and resilience. Living away from home teaches young people how to manage their time, take responsibility for daily routines and adapt to new environments – and these are skills that will serve them well throughout life. Cultural exposure is equally significant. Studying in the UK allows students to engage with peers from diverse backgrounds, broadening their worldview and preparing them for a globalised society. For many Asian parents, these combined benefits make UK boarding schools an investment in their children's future success and personal growth.

In this issue, we run the full gamut from 3-18+, with plenty of insights and inspiration from education insiders. In our feature about Service culture, we ask three schools about the value (and values) of extracurricular activities such as CCF, DofE and volunteering. These days there's a much wider understanding, and also a growing recognition, of the huge value of service activities within education. The skills and attributes they teach – from teamwork and leadership to self-esteem – give young people a much clearer sense of what they can achieve in the world beyond classrooms. And that, surely, is the whole point of education. Of course, results matter – but a child moving abroad for their education is likely to achieve far more than simply top grades.

> “STUDYING IN THE UK ALLOWS STUDENTS TO ENGAGE **WITH PEERS** FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, **BROADENING THEIR WORLDVIEW** AND **PREPARING THEM FOR A GLOBALISED SOCIETY**”

Libby Norman
EDITOR



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CONTRIBUTORS

Christian San José

Headmaster, Wycliffe College

Christian San José studied Geography at Oxford and trained at Sandhurst, serving in the Army within the Royal Green Jackets (The Rifles) before moving into education. He was at Radley for 11 years before being appointed Senior Deputy Head at Giggleswick School in 2021. He joined all-through Gloucestershire school Wycliffe as Headmaster at the start of the 2024-5 academic year.

Orlagh Hotchkiss

Assistant Principal, Concord College

Orlagh Hotchkiss studied Acting at Northampton University and completed her PGCE and MA in Teaching and Learning at Birmingham City. She joined Concord in 2018 as teacher of Drama and took on roles as a Head of House and Head of Year before being appointed Assistant Principal (Co-curricular, Outreach and Inclusion) in 2024.

James Barton

Global Director, MPW Group

James Barton studied Archaeology and Ancient History at Warwick, followed by an MA in Performance Philosophy. Working in education for over 15 years, he has authored Trotman Getting Into… guides across a range of academic subject areas, as well as giving talks to, among others, TEDx and 'How To Academy'.

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Welcome

From ANDERSON EDUCATION

WHAT ASPIRATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

As parents we want our children to grow up as happy, healthy and successful young men and women; we strive to provide the best education possible and support them every step of the way, so that they can be the best version of themselves. There are many options for Expat families living in the Middle East and many consider boarding school in the UK. Joining a boarding school is more than just an education, it is a way of life and offers so many opportunities:

Excellent teaching – Experienced teachers who are passionate about their subject instil a love of learning, an ability to think creatively and to problem solve. Academic and learning support staff are on site and available throughout the week offering revision clinics, catch-up sessions or just the opportunity to ask a question.

> JOINING A BOARDING SCHOOL IS MORE THAN JUST AN EDUCATION: **IT IS A WAY OF LIFE, AND OFFERS SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES**

Extracurricular activities – Schools offer a wide variety of clubs and activities for boarders to take part in during evenings and weekends. Students are encouraged to try something new, make the most of the facilities and find something that they really enjoy.

Small class sizes – With a pupil-teacher ratio of just 12 to 18 students in a class, teachers have the opportunity to get to know individual students and to tailor the learning environment to meet their needs.

Campus and facilities – Research has shown that the environment children learn in has a profound impact on their engagement. The seamless blend of historic and modern buildings, extensive grounds and world-class facilities for sport, music and the Arts, provides a dynamic environment that stays with the students long after they have left school.

A bespoke curriculum – Independent schools are able to teach beyond the national curriculum and the exam syllabus, providing students with a broad balanced curriculum and the opportunity to develop a true passion for a subject. This in turn prepares students for further study and future employment.

The academics – Independent schools achieve excellent results. All schools produce a Destination of Leavers List, outlining which universities and courses their students progressed to; this is a good indication of the strength of teaching. Sixth Form Options are offered to suit the learning style of each individual student, with a choice of A Levels, IB Diploma or BTEC vocational qualifications.

Outstanding pastoral care – Supporting a student's wellbeing, mental, social, physical and intellectual development is an integral part of a school's pastoral care. Boarding life is very structured with the day filled from the moment they jump out of bed to the time they get back in at night. A focus on the whole child provides the foundations they need to develop into well-rounded individuals, encourages confidence and independence and provides the life skills needed to prepare for life beyond school.

Sara Sparling
DIRECTOR AND EDUCATION CONSULTANT,
ANDERSON EDUCATION
andersoneducation.co.uk • ukboardingschoolexhibition.com
enquiries@andersoneducation.co.uk

MEDIA STAR

Hurtwood House has cemented its position as 'best school for Media Studies' for the second year, with student Evie achieving the top mark in the world. Evie, who is off to IE Business School, Madrid, was presented with a certificate by her teacher Stuart Butcher. In all, 23 of this year's Media A-level students earned A* grades.

> "Evie is top in the world for Media Studies A level – and 22 Hurtwood classmates also earned an A* grade"

> *"The human mind has not achieved anything greater than the ability to share feelings and thoughts through language"*
>
> JAMES EARL JONES

Musical highlight

Moor Park School staged a large-scale production of *Shrek the Musical JR.* for students in Years 6-8, bringing the characters of Shrek, Fiona, Donkey, and others to life with enthusiasm and professionalism. "The energy and enthusiasm from everyone – on and off the stage – was simply amazing," says Moor Park Head of Performing Arts Toby Dunham.

CRACKING ACHIEVEMENTS

Dulwich College hosted the national round for the international physics challenge, the Weizmann Safecracking Competition, with its own team achieving fifth in this tough event. With 21 safes entered by students from 16 different schools, the competition tested creativity, engineering skills and problem-solving abilities – also requiring exceptional teamwork.

RUGBY SIGNING

James Pater, Upper Sixth pupil at The Leys, has signed his first professional contract with the Northampton Saints. This milestone comes after representing England U18 in the Six Nations this year, earning caps for England U19 and leading The Leys to victory in the Uppingham Sevens tournament. "It is a dream come true," he says.

LACROSSE CHAMPS

Queen Anne's School (QAS) celebrated after its U19A lacrosse team were crowned champions at the National Schools Lacrosse Tournament. QAS fought through two days of competition to secure the title for the first time in nearly 30 years, the win being secured after a hard-fought 3-2 victory over St Catherine's, Bramley.

NATIONAL
CHAMPIONS

Motor head

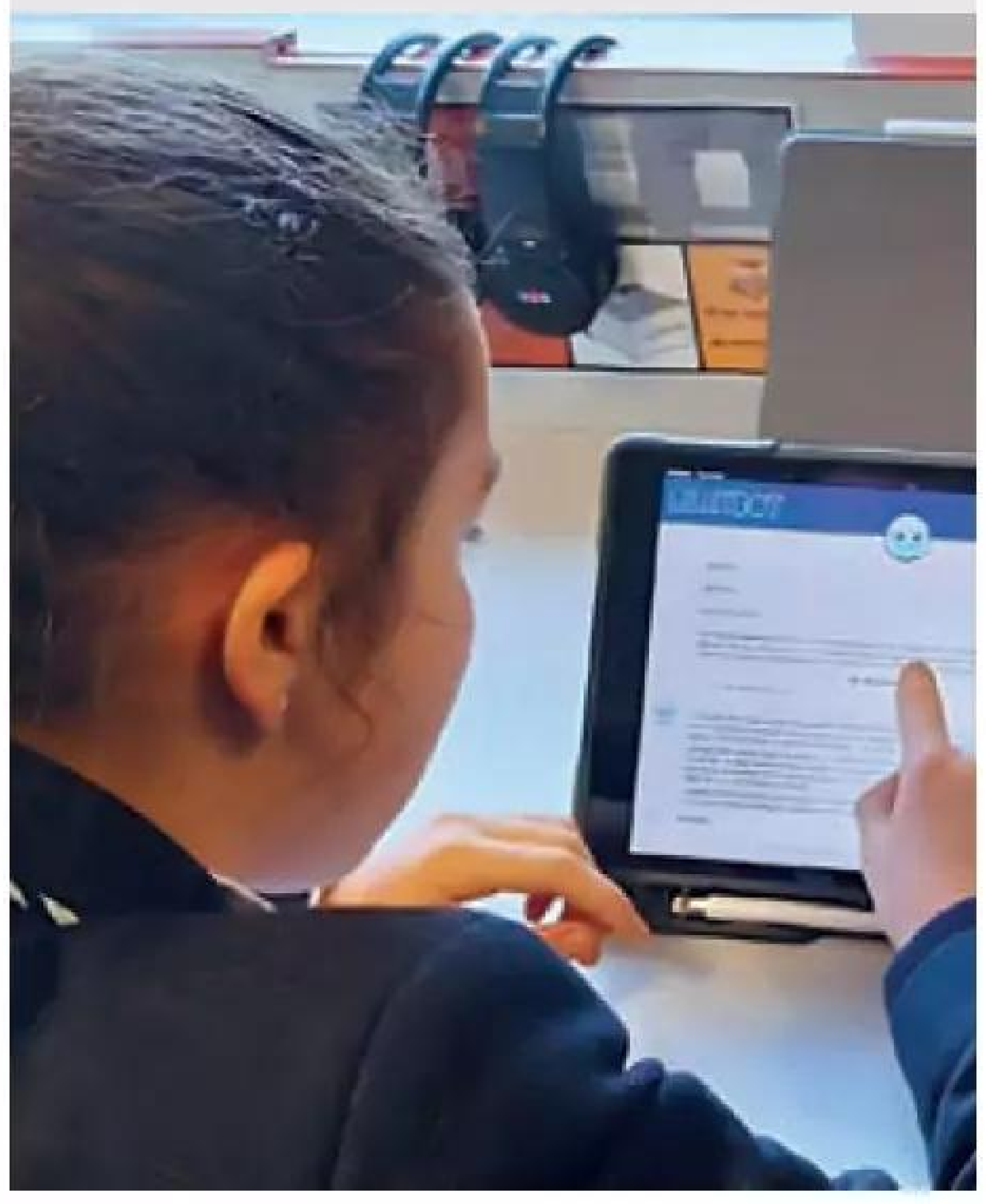
Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate has a new driver for the CityCar Cup Championship, incorporating the Student Motorsport challenge 2025. Emilia Vincent, an ex-Motorsport Engineering student from Wiltshire College, brings a wealth of experience. The Collegiate launched this as an extracurricular option in 2022 – you can follow the team at @qemotorsports.

OUTDOOR SPIRIT

Mill on the Brue activity centre offers lots of fun adventures, but it's also celebrating its Zero Heroes food waste policy (no food waste after meals), now running for over a decade at the site. It's one of many green initiatives, including ongoing tree planting and a coach escort from London to Somerset for Summer Camps.

Digital demo

Feltonfleet's Digital Prefects confidently demonstrated the school's own AI-powered learning assistant, RileyBot, at a recent meeting of Pre Senior Baccalaureate (PSB) schools to discuss Artificial Intelligence in education. Leading discussion and answering complex questions, the Year 8 pupils showcased how pupil voice and digital leadership are shaping the future of education.



JAPANESE OPTION

From September, the International School of London will offer secondary students (11+) a Japanese language acquisition option, alongside French, Spanish and Mandarin. ISL Head Richard Parker (pictured with teacher Tamako Matsukuma) says it sits alongside 24 home languages already at the Chiswick school.

Small wonders

Wellington student Momo X has won a host of awards for his photography, featured in his book, *The Art of Small*. His passion for 'ultra-macro' photography started young, and at 15 he became the youngest Chinese photographer to appear in *National Geographic*.

> *"How very little can be done under the spirit of fear"*
>
> FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

SOMETHING THEY SAID

> "THE MOST DIFFICULT THING IS THE DECISION TO ACT, THE REST IS MERELY TENACITY"
>
> AMELIA EARHART

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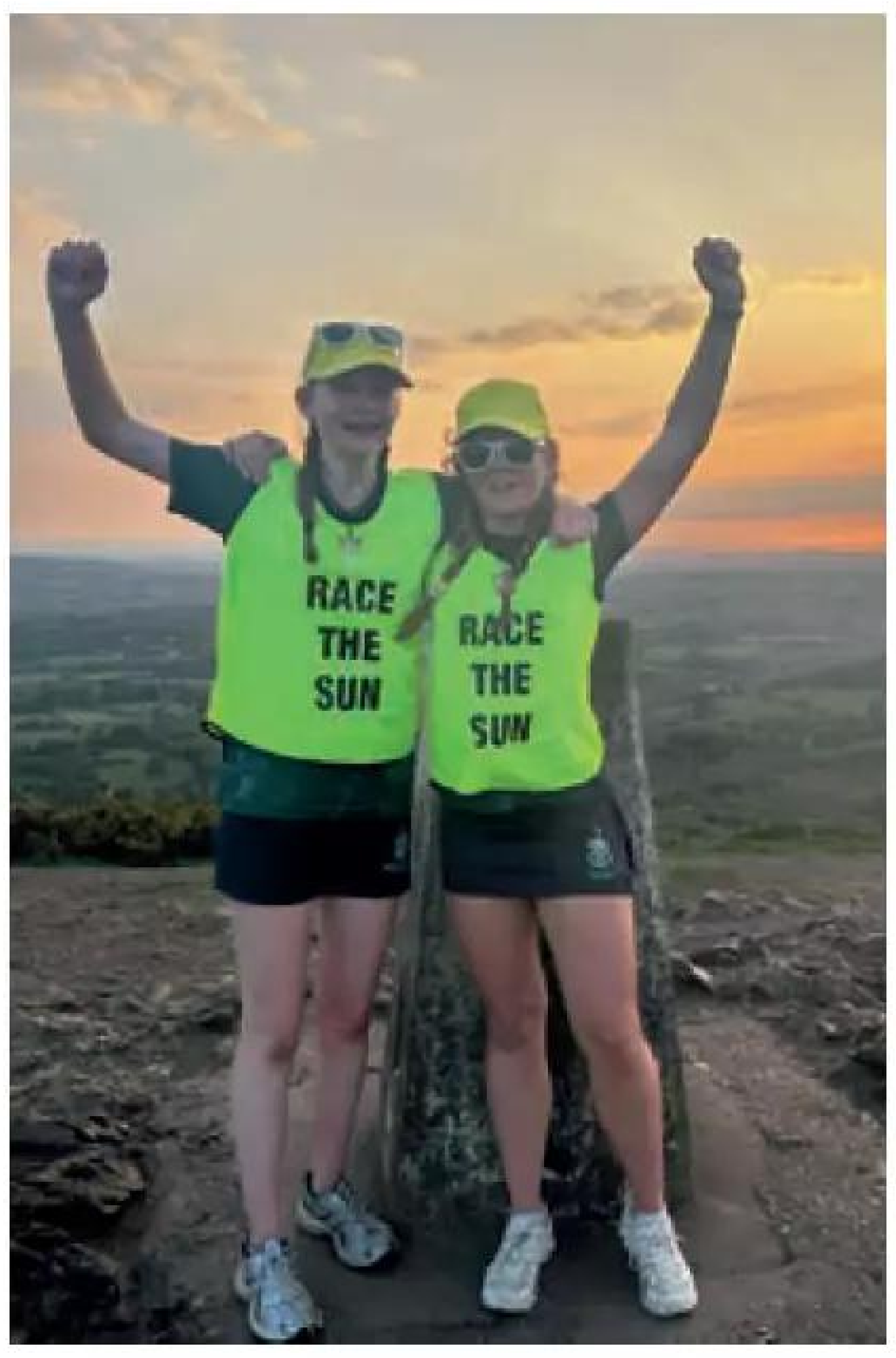

SUN SEEKERS

Malvern School teenagers braved soaring temperatures to race some 200 miles against the sun with no technology or navigation aids. The pupils, all aged 14 and 15, participated in the first 'Race the Sun' from Kent back to the Malvern Hills, collecting for charity along the way. The top three teams were all female.

Exam free

St Benedict's School in Ealing has announced that pupils in the Junior School will no longer sit the 11+ entrance exam for transferring to its Senior School from September 2025. It says this allows students to maintain momentum in learning and ensures a smooth, confident transition. The decision followed a consultation with parents, who were overwhelmingly in favour.

LIBRARY HELPER

Bedford School Sixth Form student Alex Lamb reached the finals of the Pupil Library Assistant of the Year Awards (PLAA). The award celebrates pupil librarians across the UK and he was nominated by the school's Library and Information Manager Lauren Chatley. "It is testament to Alex that he finds himself on this year's list," she says.

ISFA
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Top Story

Football victory

Stephen Perse Cambridge girls' football team won the national Independent Schools Football Association U15 Girls Shield. After securing victories in the first four rounds, the girls beat St Dunstan's College 3-1 in the final. "They are now looking forward to building on their success," says Deputy Head of Co-Curricular Jenny McLeod.

CO-ED UPDATE

Moulsford Prep in Oxfordshire has brought forward the next phase of its co-ed plans and will begin welcoming girls into Year 3 (age 7) from September, a year ahead of schedule. The school has been busy preparing facilities, curriculum and training in readiness for the new cohort. Moulsford Pre-Prep has already moved to co-education.

GIVING BACK

Haberdashers' Elstree Schools raised £190,000 for bursary and hardship schemes during a giving day in April. This year's focus was on helping current students. There were fun runs, including the GivingDash to run 3.5km and unlock extra donor funds. Further MiniDash and TinyDash events took place for the youngest pupils.

FORCES SUPPORT

Parents in the British Army, Navy, Marines and RAF will pay just ten per cent of school fees for their children boarding at Felsted School from September. With one of the oldest CCF contingents in the country, the Essex school has a long tradition of welcoming Forces families and those in receipt of CEA will be eligible.

SOMETHING THEY SAID

> **"THE MORE YOU DO SOMETHING, THE LESS FRIGHTENING IT BECOMES** BECAUSE YOU START TO REALISE THE OUTCOME IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOU THINK"

HUGH JACKMAN

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL TO GENERAL GORDON

Gordon's School Pipes and Drums students had a once in a lifetime opportunity, performing at Windsor Castle for His Majesty The King, the school Patron. The school is the National Memorial to General Gordon and in this, its 140th anniversary year, the Pipes and Drums are performing in places associated with General Gordon.
After the performance, The King spoke to all 52 members of the Band, joining them for a photograph.

New starter

This month sees the appointment of a new Principal, Emma Arrand at Wymondham College in Norfolk. Wymondham College is the largest State Boarding and Day school in the UK. Her appointment marks an exciting new chapter at the College, continuing to build on the school's outstanding reputation.

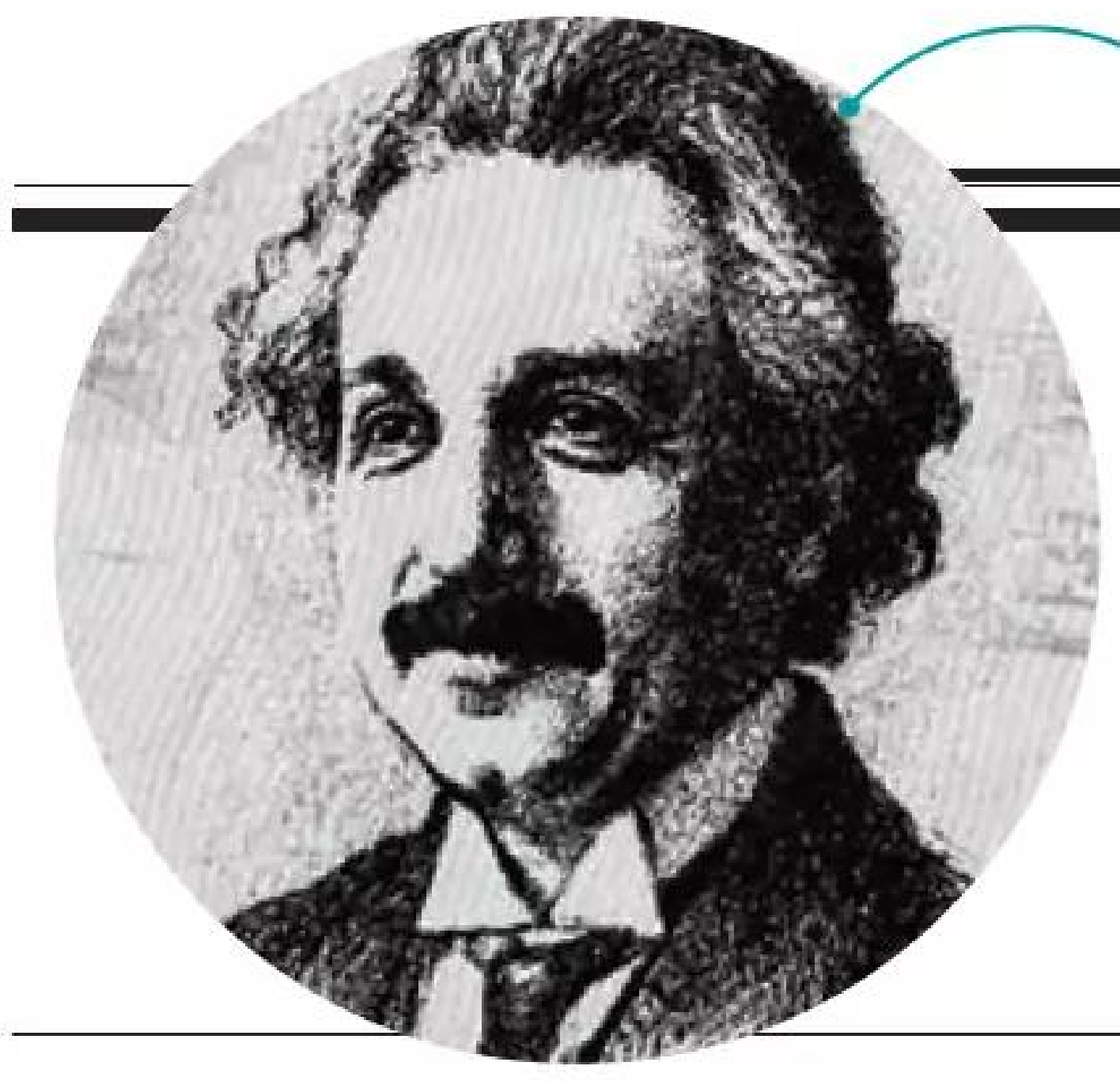
Sheffield Girls' GDST is celebrating the outstanding success of the Class of 2025, with 35% of grades at A and 66% at A*-A.

An impressive 72% of pupils moved on to Russell Group universities or Oxbridge. These results highlight the ambition, confidence and academic excellence fostered by an all-girls education at Sheffield Girls', one the top ranked schools in the north of England.

Top Story

COLCHESTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The 2025 cohort at Colchester Royal Grammar School achieved the school's largest ever number of Oxbridge offers, with more than 40 places secured across all subjects. CRGS encourage our students to enjoy challenge and aim high in an education experience which values dedication, collaboration, enrichment of education through extracurricular activities, and has a history of academic excellence.



SOMETHING THEY SAID

> "EVERYBODY IS A GENIUS. BUT IF YOU JUDGE A FISH BY ITS ABILITY TO CLIMB A TREE, IT WILL SPEND ITS WHOLE LIFE BELIEVING THAT IT IS STUPID"
>
> ALBERT EINSTEIN

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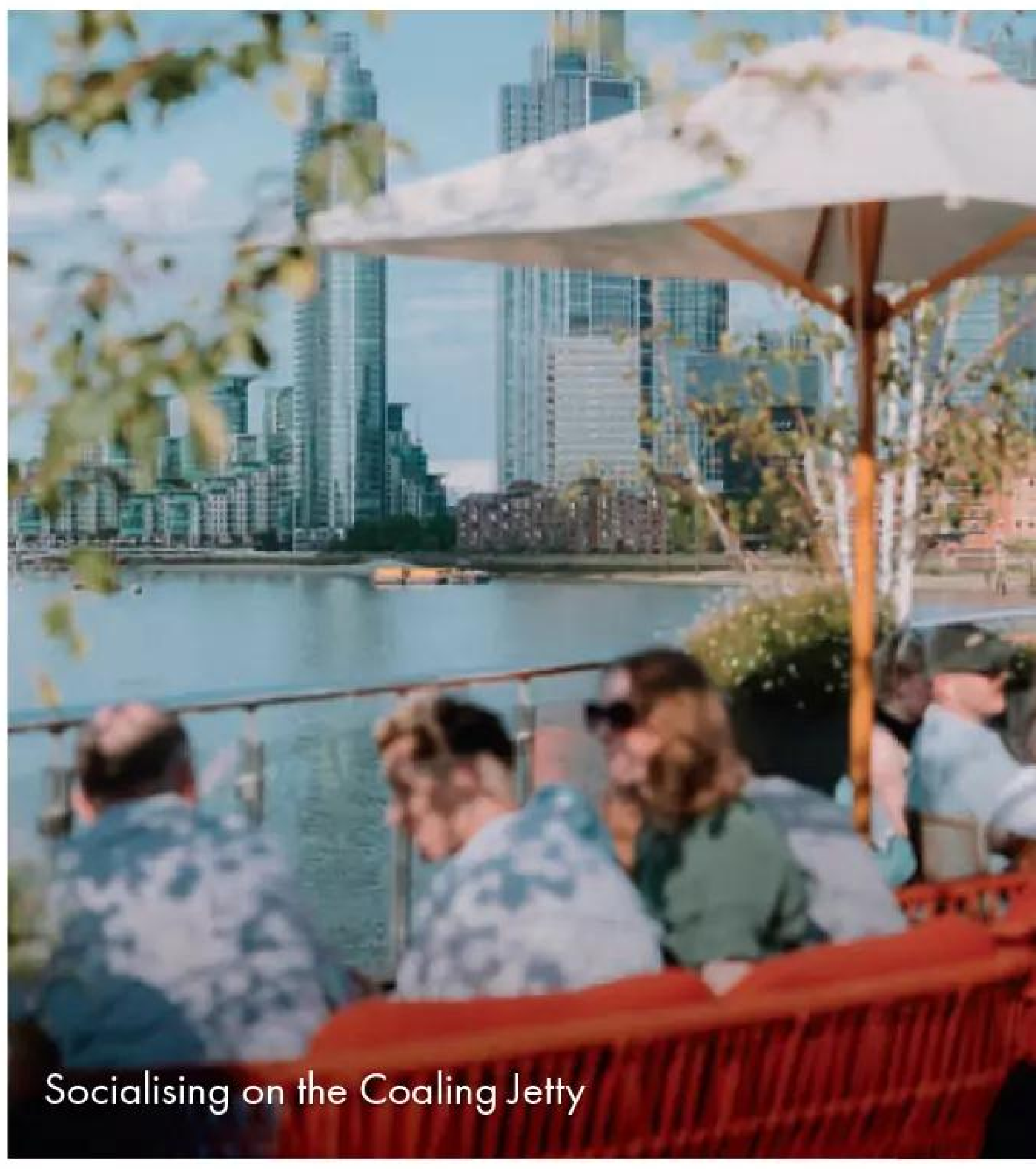

Socialising on the Coaling Jetty

Shopping inside the Power Station

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Focus

CLIFTON COLLEGE *P.* 22 CHARACTER EDUCATION *P.* 29

SPACE TO SHINE

From outdoor pursuits to creative arts and academic societies, there is something for everyone at Clifton College.

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PERSONAL BEST

Clifton College in Bristol values each pupil for their individual strengths and encourages everyone to thrive in their own way

ABOVE AND RIGHT *Pupils at Clifton College are happy and confident*

***Q** As a through school, Clifton College has long been renowned for the strength of itscommunity. How do you support young people joining the school and help them to belong?*

A Clifton College's house system is the cornerstone of its community, fostering a real sense of belonging from day one. Whether a day pupil or boarding, every pupil belongs to a house. Within each house, pupils of all ages interact, creating a dynamic environment of mentorship and peer support. Older pupils take on leadership roles, guiding their younger peers and nurturing their confidence. This vertical house model breaks down traditional age barriers, promoting collaboration and mutual respect.

Crucially, the house system provides a strong and personalised support network. Housemasters and mistresses act as trusted mentors, offering pastoral care and guidance. This personalised support system ensures that each pupil feels valued and understood, contributing significantly to their emotional well-being. The Clifton College house system, therefore, offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, nurturing personal growth, social responsibility, and a lifelong sense of belonging.

***Q** In what ways does your location – in one of the UK's great cities – impact the spirit of the school and enrich the opportunities available to your students?*

A Clifton College is located in Bristol in the South West of England. A large and vibrant city, it has excellent road, rail and air links to national and international destinations. The College itself sits at the heart of the bustling local community of Clifton. Home to independent shops, cafes, restaurants and the world famous Clifton Suspension Bridge. Not many boarding schools in the UK sit in such a culturally diverse, hugely exciting and friendly city. Our location enables a spirit of independence and exploration. The city of Bristol is bursting with creativity with a vibrant music, theatre and arts scene, and home to many professional sports teams, there is always something new for our students to discover.

ABOVE
Music at Clifton College

How is boarding designed to meet the needs of your diverse community of over 50 nationalities?

Ⓐ We provide dedicated pastoral care led by the Housemaster or Housemistress who are trained to understand and address the unique challenges that international pupils may face, such as homesickness, language barriers, and cultural adjustment. The House staff are supported by a dedicated team of House tutors and Matrons that spend time getting to know all the children individually.

Our boarding houses are not just places to sleep: they are vibrant communities where we actively promote cultural exchange. We celebrate a variety of international festivals and holidays such as the Moon Festival, World Afro Day and Chinese New Year, where pupils can learn, share traditions, food, and music from a diverse range of countries. This, we believe, fosters mutual respect and a deeper understanding of different cultures, turning diversity into a key strength of the College community.

Your school motto is 'Aim high, stay grounded'. How do you help students develop both academic prowess and character?

Ⓐ Developing academic prowess is about more than just getting good grades; it's about fostering intellectual curiosity and a love for learning. We offer a challenging and expansive curriculum. Our Sixth Form boasts an impressive 30 subjects, while our GCSE programme offers over 20 optional subjects. Beyond the core curriculum, students benefit from extensive enrichment and extension programmes designed to encourage exploration. We encourage our pupils to be leaders in their own learning and in their communities. Through student councils, leadership programmes, and mentoring opportunities, pupils gain the confidence to express their ideas, support their peers, and take responsibility for shaping both their school environment and their future.

Our boarding houses are not just places to sleep: they are vibrant communities where we promote cultural exchange

BELOW
Expansive grounds allow for lots of sports

With higher education changing and tomorrow's careers evolving, how do you support students in making the right academic choices for them?

Ⓐ Clifton has an established careers programme, providing progressive careers education, information, advice and guidance across Years 7 to 13. The programme is delivered through a wide range of careers events and activities including employer encounters, experiences of the workplace, Further Education/Higher Education encounters, labour market information and careers personal guidance.

You offer a wealth of co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities. What's on offer and how do you encourage students to get involved?

Ⓐ From sports and outdoor pursuits to creative arts and academic societies, there is something for everyone. Our dedicated Housemasters and Housemistresses, supported by a committed team of tutors, work individually with each pupil to encourage them to push the boundaries of what they think they are capable of.

No two pupils' programmes look the same; we tailor the journey to each individual, allowing them to pursue their passions at the highest levels, whether that's performing with the youth Royal Academy of Music, representing Bristol at the youth parliament, or achieving national recognition in enterprise challenges. Through this individualised approach and the sheer breadth of opportunities, we empower our pupils to discover new talents, build character, and embrace a fulfilling, well-rounded school life.

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Talking
HEAD

Education Transformation

*The Heads of **Sherborne Girls** and **Sherborne Boys** on delivering the right combination of skills and attitudes to prepare pupils for a changing world*

Education is undergoing one of the most profound transformations in living memory. In a world being reshaped by technological disruption, climate challenges, and shifting cultural and geopolitical landscapes, schools face an urgent question. How do we prepare young people to thrive as resilient, ethical leaders who are empowered to create a positive future for themselves and the world around them?

For decades, academic attainment has been the dominant measure of school success. Grades, university places and league table positions have provided clear, if narrow, benchmarks. Yet employers, universities, and pupils themselves are increasingly signalling that this is not enough. Character, wellbeing, adaptability, teamwork and the capacity to collaborate across disciplines are emerging as equally important currencies in the 21st century.

> **“Young people must be equipped not just with knowledge, but with the self-awareness, resilience, and ethical compass to thrive”**

At Sherborne Schools Group, we believe these are not competing priorities but complementary ones. Academic rigour provides the intellectual foundations, but it must be balanced with intentional character development and the cultivation of wellbeing. If young people are to successfully navigate complexity and uncertainty, they must be equipped not just with knowledge, but with the self-awareness, resilience and ethical compass to thrive.

ABOVE *Pupils at Sherborne*

This integrated approach requires more than adding a wellbeing lesson to the timetable or running a leadership workshop. It involves embedding these values into the daily fabric of school life – through mentoring, pastoral systems, opportunities for reflection and leadership roles that allow pupils to learn by doing. It means we must ensure that success is defined not only by examination results but also by the capacity to act with integrity, to care for others and to make responsible decisions.

The challenge, of course, is how to achieve this balance while also respecting each pupil’s individuality. Learners are not a homogenous cohort. This means schools must design flexible, personalised pathways that stretch the most able and inspire and support every learner, whatever their starting point. Interdisciplinary approaches, digital fluency and real-world projects all help to ensure that learning feels meaningful and remains relevant.

Crucially, this balance also positions pupils to become innovators and changemakers. By linking academic study with entrepreneurship, sustainability and community engagement, schools help young people see themselves as active contributors to society, not passive recipients of knowledge.

It requires courage to move towards an integrated model of education. We also need evidence-based evaluation, so that schools can measure progress in character and wellbeing as rigorously as they measure exam performance. And it calls for a culture in which staff are supported to be innovators, modelling the adaptability and creativity we expect from pupils.

RUTH SULLIVAN
Head
Sherborne Girls

SIMON HEARD
Headmaster
Sherborne Boys

Despite these challenges, the prize is great. By aligning academic excellence with character and wellbeing, schools prepare young people who are not only knowledgeable but also grounded, empathetic, and future ready. In a rapidly changing world, this is not a luxury – it is an imperative.

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Ideal WORLD

*George Vance of **Rockport School** considers the importance of character education in schools*

As I embark on the Round Square International Conference in Dubai, where I will join the Heads of 260 schools who underpin the education of their pupils with the IDEALS set out by Round Square founder Kurt Hahn; I take time to reflect on the importance of character education in schools.

Martin Luther King Jr stated: "Intelligence plus character: that is the goal of true education," and I believe that as educators it is our responsibility to support our pupils in becoming the best that they can be. That should not start and stop with academic learning. Character education in schools is a vital component of holistic student development, seeking to foster ethical values, social responsibility and emotional intelligence. Its importance lies in encouraging positive personal qualities such as respect, integrity, empathy, and resilience; helping students navigate challenges, shaping their moral compass, and ensuring they use their knowledge responsibly.

Character education is essential in creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment. When students are taught to value diversity, show kindness, and resolve conflicts in a measured and considered way, it reduces incidents of bullying, discrimination, and classroom disruptions. This positive climate enhances learning by allowing students to focus on their studies without fear or anxiety, and nurtures a sense of belonging and community.

ABOVE *Pupils at Rockport School*

Rockport is the only independent boarding school in Northern Ireland; and significantly, a school located on the island of Ireland which, uniquely, has no formal denominational affiliation or church representation on the governing body. Round Square IDEALS: Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service provide our students not only with the international dimension necessary to combat those twin threats of parochialism and sectarianism that have dogged this part of the UK in the past; but also with a keen sense of moral purpose that underpins everything we do. It is through these pillars that we are able to enhance our pupils' educational experience, and prepare them sufficiently to thrive once their schooling is completed.

Employers and universities seek out individuals with more rounded characteristics than simply academic prowess – demonstration of integrity, teamwork, perserverance, and communication skills. By embedding character education in daily teaching, we can develop responsible citizens and future leaders.

Character education also enhances students' emotional well-being. This is a big focus for us at Rockport, where we prioritise physical and emotional well-being through daily physical activity for all pupils, and encourage maximum participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

In essence, it is my belief that character education is not an optional add-on but a foundational element of quality education. It is clear that developing a structure to support the needs of each individual child is vital to their rounded development. By integrating moral and ethical learning into our everyday offering, we help shape well-rounded individuals who are academically capable, emotionally balanced, and socially responsible.

MR GEORGE VANCE
Headmaster
Rockport School and Golf Academy

ASHFORD SCHOOL

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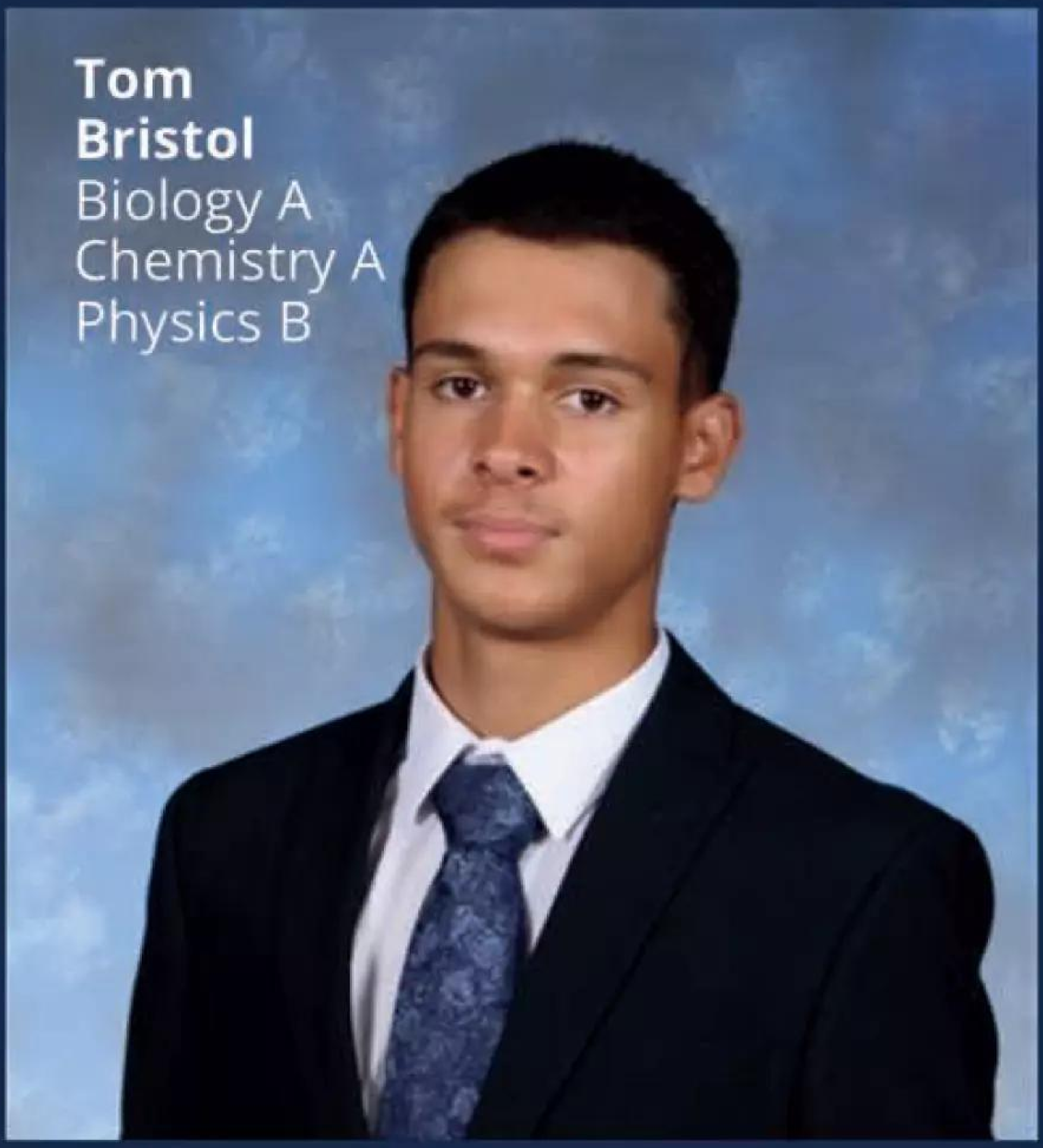
Educated for Life: Future Doctors



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Bristol
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Chemistry A
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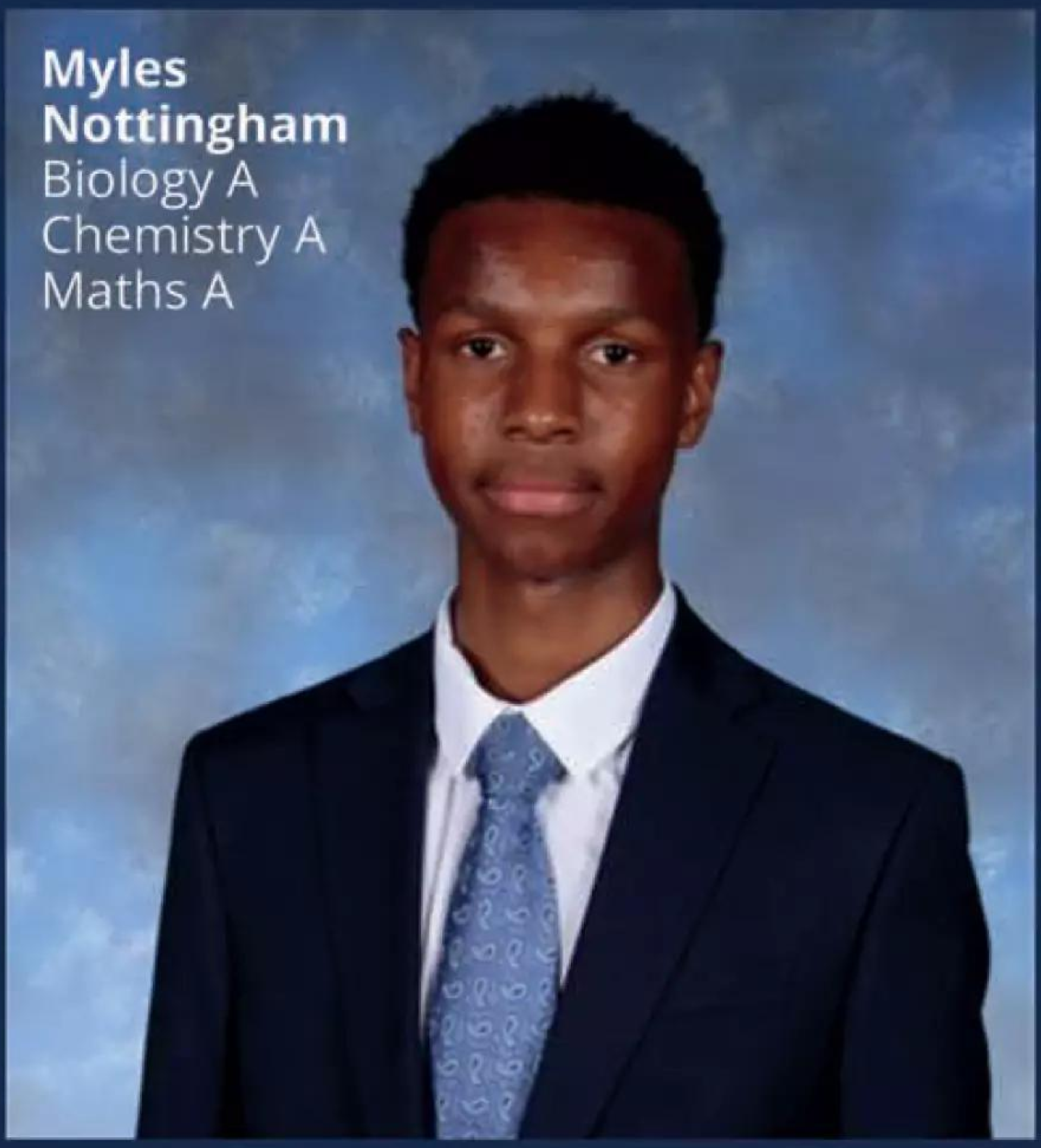

Myles
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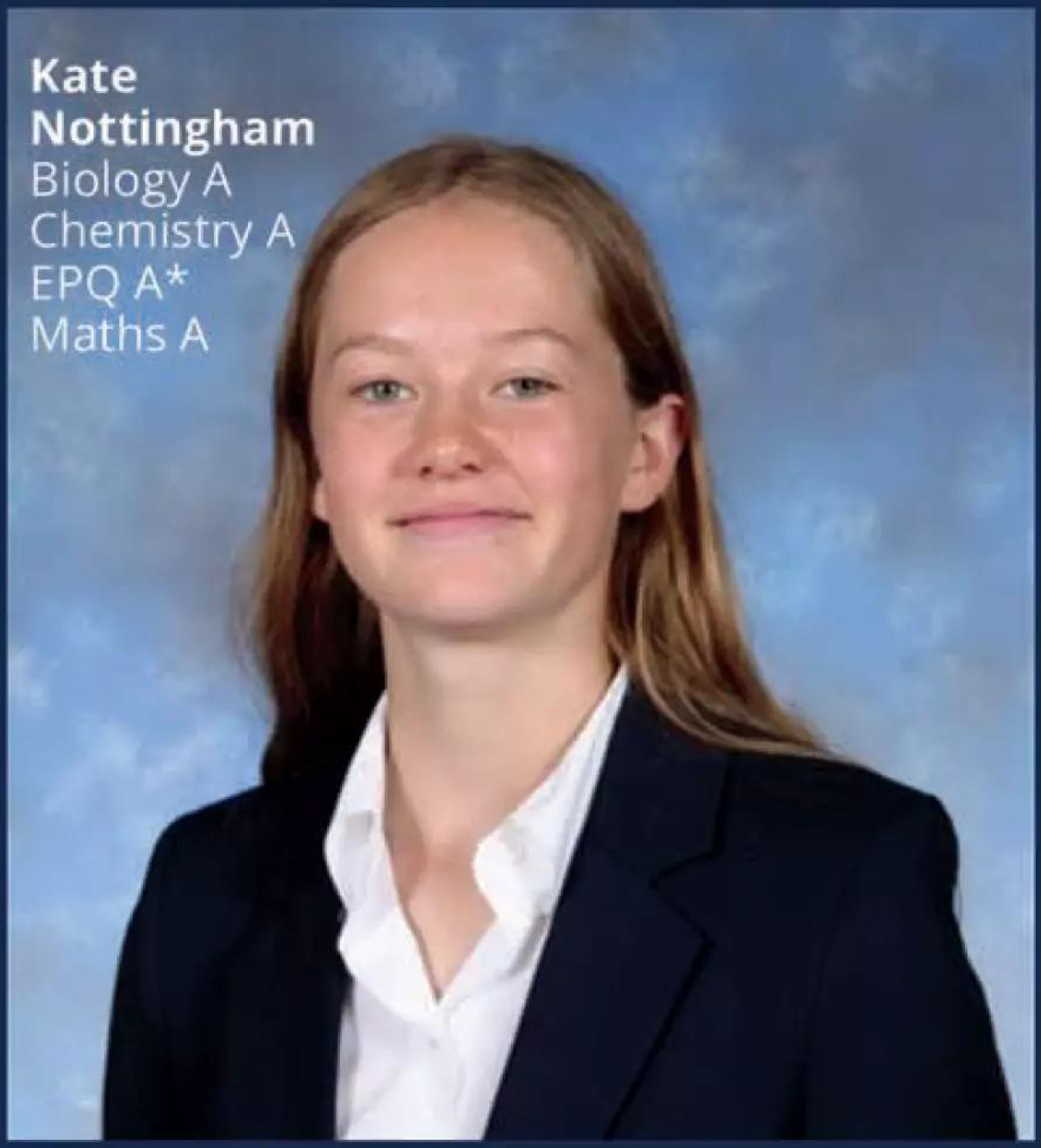

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ABOVE
Pupils at RMS for Girls

Studying to STRENGTHS

*Clare Freeman of **RMS for Girls** on why students should study to their strengths and interests to prepare for the future of 'squiggly' career paths*

You've likely heard of 'Squiggly Careers', a concept pioneered by Sarah Ellis and Helen Tupper of organisation 'Amazing if'. The idea is simple but powerful: we must prepare our students for a working life that is anything but linear. With jobs constantly evolving, the straight career path is becoming a relic of the past. Adults today must be agile, learning new skills and pivoting between roles as the job market shifts. This is the essence of a squiggly career.

As Head of a Sixth Form, I see this challenge firsthand. I spend countless hours guiding students and their parents through the crucial process of choosing A-level subjects. Yet, too often, these conversations are framed by a rigid, predetermined notion of what a student should be. A parent might insist their daughter study Maths 'because it's a good A level to have', or Business 'because she wants to go into business'. Similarly, some students have had their hearts set on a specific career, such as medicine, since childhood. This tunnel vision can blind them to what might be a better, more fulfilling path for them – one that suits their strengths and interests.

> **"A top UK accountancy firm once shared that their largest group of graduate recruits hold a History degree, not one in Maths or Economics"**

Don't get me wrong, Maths is a fantastic subject, but if a student struggles with it, forcing them to take it isn't a good idea. A student can absolutely get into a top university and secure a well-paid job without a Maths A level. The real goal should be to find a route that brings them both happiness and success. Interestingly, a top UK accountancy firm once shared that their largest group of graduate recruits hold a History degree, not one in Maths or Economics. Why? Because these students have honed critical skills like analysis and attention to detail – skills that are essential in any industry. Every subject develops a unique set of skills, and it's these transferable abilities that we should be focusing on.

At RMS, we champion an educational philosophy that is all about the individual. With 28 different A-level subjects on offer, we can help each student find the combination that plays to their strengths and passions. Our Futures' Fridays programme, run by our dedicated Futures department, gives students the opportunity to see how their unique skillsets are valuable in any industry. Whether they are creative thinkers, problem solvers or team players, they learn that every industry needs people with diverse skills and perspectives. Our phenomenon-based learning course takes this a step further, allowing students to tackle real-world problems from a multidisciplinary perspective. By collaborating with peers from different subject areas, they see firsthand the value of diverse viewpoints.

So, when you're thinking about your child's next steps, help them embrace a squiggly education. Encourage them to focus on what they enjoy and are good at, even if it means them changing their plans along the way.

CLARE FREEMAN
Head of School,
Sixth Form, RMS for Girls

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SCHOOL GARDENS P. 34 STARTING EARLY P. 39

GREEN AND PLEASANT

Feltonfleet pupils enjoy garden time

See Page 34

GARDEN TIME

ABOVE
Caring for the bees at Framlingham College Prep

TOP
Getting to know herbs at St Christopher's The Hall

From observing the seasons to growing and tending plants, outdoor crafts and creating wildlife habitats, school gardens are a place for learning, contemplation and fun. We speak to three schools about how they manage garden time

FRAMLINGHAM COLLEGE

Set within 23 acres of Suffolk countryside, Framlingham College Prep School offers its pupils plenty of freedom to play, explore and learn. The 'hands, heart, head' learning approach here recognises how children learn best. Connections are made first through their hands, via play and exploration. Then they make an emotional connection with their discoveries. After that, they use their heads to think creatively and critically. This approach enables children to explore independently and start to make links in their learning.

Throughout the academic year, the curriculum supports learning outside – no matter what subject or age group. From the Year 6 to 8 sessions learning camping skills and woodland crafts in Forest School to biology lessons at the College beehives for Year 4 and 5 pupils. Meanwhile, Early Years children begin their outdoor learning journey with insect counts and pond dipping. Framlingham College Prep believes that giving children the opportunity to appreciate nature helps them to grow in confidence and independence and also develop a greater respect and understanding of the world around us.

The school's Junior Duke programme – described as 'rather like a mini DofE' – offers opportunities to develop different skills and nurture essential qualities. Skills learnt range from bushcraft and den building to gardening and mapping. Sustainability is a critical element and, since 2021, Framlingham Prep pupils have planted 420 trees across the school grounds in partnership with the Woodland Trust, also creating hedgerows to support habitats for native wildlife – these then become study zones.

The popular gardening club works to support insect and bee populations, and each year young gardeners take a selection of their green-fingered creations to the Suffolk Show, last year winning Highly Commended in the school garden display class. The benefits of gardening and outdoor learning are critical for this age group, says the school, and range from improved motor skills to physical and mental health.

For some young children, outdoor learning can be daunting at first, but most pupils show curiosity rather than fear. Being outside brings a feeling of freedom – to ask questions and speak openly without anxiety. Activities such as tending beehives or campfire lighting may bring some apprehension initially, but the school's approach fosters open-mindedness and risk awareness while embedding valuable academic and life skills.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S THE HALL

The school garden at St Chrisopher's The Hall is a happy and tranquil space created by pupils themselves as part of a lunchtime gardening club and in celebration of the Beckenham, south London school's 130th anniversary. It's a small but much-loved corner of the school, nurtured by children who have taken real ownership of its upkeep. Over time, it has become not only a place of planting but a calm retreat where pupils go to sit and read, reflect or simply enjoy nature during class breaks. While the school has access to many beautiful outdoor spaces nearby for nature walks, play and exploration, the garden is unique as a space designed by and for the children learning here.

ABOVE
Gardening jobs at Feltonfleet

BELOW
Watering time at St Christopher's

St Christopher's views outdoor time as offering a valuable place to decompress, and the garden is especially valuable for pupils with SEN and those younger children who sometimes become overwhelmed in classroom settings. The sensory experiences of gardening – touching earth, smelling herbs, hearing birdsong – create a calming and grounded environment and pupils report that it helps them feel more focused and relaxed for the rest of the day.

The school's most exciting recent project has been lavender planting across the garden. The children are learning how to care for and nurture the plants throughout the seasons, with the purpose of harvesting the lavender beds to create handmade lavender bags. These will then be sold at the school's summer fair as part of an enterprise project, helping children learn about sustainability, small business skills and the full growing cycle from seedling to sale. It's a practical, purposeful project that has sparked enormous enthusiasm.

Pupils are generally very positive about gardening – especially when they see real results, such as a flower they planted themselves start to bloom. For new gardeners, there may be initial reservations about worms and mud, but those vanish quickly once they get stuck in and start to have fun. The gardening club helps to model curiosity and resilience, and children support each other in overcoming initial hesitation or squeamishness.

St Christopher's The Hall school garden has become a natural extension of the curriculum. From understanding plant biology and lifecycles in science to measurement and data collection in maths and storytelling inspired by nature for English, the outdoor setting provides learning opportunities.

In particular, the lavender project ties into both science and enterprise learning, encouraging children to think critically about where things come from, how they grow, and the environmental impact of choices we make every day.

FELTONFLEET SCHOOL

Set within 25 acres of green space in Cobham, Surrey, Feltonfleet has an expansive campus. This enables learning to spill naturally from classroom into the great outdoors.

Outdoor education is woven into the fabric of daily life. From sowing seeds in gardening club to harvesting vegetables in Forest School, pupils learn how to nurture plants and also care for themselves, each another and the world around. "The natural environment is a living classroom," says Forest School teacher Anne Mossop. "It sparks creativity, builds resilience and cultivates a deep respect for nature."

Weekly Forest School sessions take place for Pre-Prep pupils in all seasons. Pupils learn how to climb trees, cook over an open fire and develop craft skills. A recent Year 2 session saw pupils using the Japanese art of *Hapa Zome*, or leaf bashing, to create colourful mirrored prints. The conversations that followed about symmetry and colour change gave a snapshot of how outdoor learning helps to build core academic understanding.

Gardening club offers a deeply sensory experience. Pupils dig, plant, water, and wait. In doing so, they develop patience, responsibility and persistence. Feltonfleet finds that tending to plants encourages empathy and collaboration – and there's the joy of tasting a tomato or strawberry they've helped grow at the end of it all.

All pupils benefit from daily access to outdoor space, with the majority of classrooms opening directly onto gardens and play areas. Regular engagement with the outdoors supports gross and fine motor skills development, nurtures confidence, and encourages independence. Whether it's threading cereal hoops for bird feeders or creating homes for woodland creatures, younger pupils learn through purposeful play. For older pupils, outdoor time offers valuable space to unwind and connect, be it in playing energetic ball games or tackling adventure play areas.

The wider school site is designed to provide outdoor variety, with quiet reading gardens, treehouse hideaways, wildlife ponds and woodland trails among the areas to be explored and enjoyed. This variety means every child can find their favourite spaces and spend valuable time there in activity or quiet reflection. In 2024, Feltonfleet's 'Roots for Tomorrow' tree restoration project was launched to protect and regenerate the school's green boundary, strengthen biodiversity, and deepen pupils' environmental awareness. It reflects the school's belief in sustainability and responsibility – not just for today's learners, but for future generations. Ⓔ

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ABOVE
Moor Park's welcoming boarding community

BELOW
The school's expansive grounds are integral to daily life

Moor Park

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For international pupils seeking the very best of British education, Moor Park offers a truly exceptional prep school experience, set in the heart of the English countryside. With its beautiful historic setting, strong pastoral care, and specialised facilities, Moor Park continues to stand out as a school where every child is known, supported, and inspired to flourish.

Nestled in a stunning rural estate, the school's expansive 85-acre grounds, which the children share with a herd of fallow deer, are integral to daily school life, providing an idyllic environment for learning and adventure. Pupils have space to explore, play, and develop confidence, while the school's welcoming boarding community offers a home away from home for children from around the world.

Pastoral care is at the heart of school life, ensuring that every pupil feels valued, secure, and ready to thrive academically and personally. The dedicated staff know each child as an individual and nurture their talents.

Moor Park have embedded the mindsets of curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, independence, resilience, and confidence into all they do, in the belief that these are vital for preparing pupils to thrive in an ever-changing world. They nurture and celebrate these qualities weekly and in turn see their pupils become more engaged, adaptable, and self-assured learners — empowered to explore ideas, overcome challenges, and grow into the best versions of themselves.

Unlike large, high-pressure schools, Moor Park offers a warm, close-knit community where every child is known, supported, and inspired. Small class sizes taught by exceptional long-standing staff ensure stability and personal attention during during pupils' most formative years.

Moor Park's outstanding facilities embody its dedication to providing an exceptional educational experience. From early, hands-on science lessons in fully equipped laboratories where pupils as young as eight earn their Bunsen burner licenses, to expert-led Art, Music, DT, and Drama, learning is both dynamic and immersive, taking place in purpose-built, specialised facilities.

A key reason families continue to choose Moor Park is the confidence it provides in preparing children for the next stage of their education. Pupils regularly progress to some of the most prestigious English senior schools, including Shrewsbury School, Eton College and Marlborough College, reflecting both the quality of education and the school's strong reputation. It is not uncommon for the children and even grandchildren of former pupils to return to the school, a testament to the lasting affection families hold for the Moor Park experience.

For international families seeking an authentic English education in a nurturing, inspiring environment, Moor Park remains one of the finest choices; a school rooted in tradition, built on community, and dedicated to ensuring every child feels a true sense of belonging. ***moorpark.org.uk***

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Senior

TEAM WINS P.42 GO OUTDOORS P.49 HARNESSING AI P.55

CHALLENGE **ACCEPTED**

Building leadership, teamwork and a culture of service.

Page 42

ABOVE
Malvern College CCF

Service CULTURE

Extracurricular elements of school life – including CCF and DofE – offer adventure but also deliver skills and qualities that are invaluable for future life and career. We ask three schools how they develop young people through a culture of service

LEFT
Wellington College students

Malvern College

At Malvern College, service is not simply an extracurricular offering but a defining element of the educational ethos. As a full boarding school and home-away-from-home for pupils aged 13 to 18, the Worcestershire school works to create a supportive environment where young people can explore, commit to, and grow through service at a pivotal stage in their development. The diverse community includes pupils from around the world – many are from services families – and this global perspective enriches community engagement and adds depth and resonance to programmes.

From the moment they reach Remove (Year 10), every Malvern pupil participates in either the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) or the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), with many choosing both to get a breadth of challenges and experiences. The DofE programme, led by Head of Outdoor Pursuits Jay Watts, includes both Silver and Gold awards and offers opportunities for physical challenge, community volunteering and expedition-based learning.

The CCF at Malvern provides a structured, skills-based environment encompassing the Army, RAF and Royal Marines sections. This programme supports character development through leadership tasks, outdoor training and teamwork. And it's exciting, too: recent introductions include flight simulator technology for RAF cadets, laser rifle training on the neighbouring Nine Acres grounds and a Bronze Award at the 2025 Cambrian Patrol. For two consecutive years, a Malvern CCF pupil has also held the prestigious title of Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire's cadet.

Malvern College says these experiences offer lasting value. Pupils build confidence, develop initiative and learn to lead and support one another – qualities that serve them well in further education and future careers and help them stand out from other applicants. Parents frequently speak to the transformative impact of these service opportunities, recognising their role in shaping mature, capable young adults.

Beyond DofE and CCF, Malvern's broader culture of service is embedded in weekly routines. Each Wednesday afternoon is dedicated to partnerships and volunteering, all of which are entirely pupil led. College pupils assist in local schools, lead digital safety initiatives and take music and performance into care homes. They also engage in longstanding international partnerships, such as the OSCAR Foundation in Mumbai and sustainable farming initiatives in Peru.

Charity work is a vibrant part of house life, with fundraising events supporting causes ranging from Cancer Research UK and Mind to the local Malvern Hills Foodbank. These elements of service and giving back often stem from personal connections. Recognising the scope of this work, the school is currently appointing a Head of Community Partnerships and Service to coordinate and further develop opportunities.

Wellington College

At Wellington, hands-on service is central to its Global Citizenship character development programme. Every Wednesday afternoon, all students take part in community-based activities – from CCF and DofE to supporting the work of care homes. These projects are led by a dedicated team of specialist teachers and embedded into the timetable.

Every Fourth Form pupil participates in CCF via weekly activities centred around the Salamanca Shield, an inter-house competition based on military and adventurous training skills and culminating in a five-day training camp. Many Fifth and Sixth Form pupils then continue on with CCF. Large numbers also participate in DofE – right up to Gold in the Lower Sixth. This year, 196 students are taking DofE Bronze in Third Form, 24 are doing Silver in Fourth Form and 18 are completing Gold in Lower Sixth.

"Our inbuilt service culture develops empathy, leadership and a sense of global responsibility," says Head of Global Citizenship and CAS Coordinator Rebecca Parks. "Many alumni go on to take up volunteering roles as a result of their experiences." Wellington is mindful of University of Northampton research indicating the significant positive impact of CCF on young people – both in improving school performance and in boosting future career prospects.

> "We listen to pupil voices and empower them to take action on causes close to their hearts"

ABOVE

Oakham students on drill

> “These moments of challenge help our pupils grow personally and face obstacles with greater confidence”

Wellington’s history – it was founded as a school for the orphaned sons of army officers – means the spirit of service is embedded in its culture. Both parents and the school see huge value in helping young people to build strengths through service. Community initiatives and service leadership roles also provide an opportunity to build networking skills, uncover interests and skills and get a taste of different roles and types of work. Students regularly draw on these real-world experiences when applying for work experience, university places and first jobs. Being active through service also develops crucial transferable skills – including resilience, adaptability, leadership and communicating with people from different backgrounds.

The school’s long-running partnership with local LAN special needs school Carwarden House has built both friendships and a vibrant activities programme, with pupils fundraising to deliver treats such as a Thorpe Park trip. Many such community initiatives are pupil led. For instance, there was a recent toy drive to support Afghan refugees. “We listen to pupil voices and empower them to take action on causes close to their hearts,” says Rebecca Parks. “This includes the Cerebral Palsy Trust, which was established by pupil David Loftus and his school peers. Pupil members recently organised a Christmas Inspire Day to celebrate the enormous progress they have made.”

Wellington’s Peace and Conflict Institute supports the charity Care4Calais and 27 pupils recently travelled to France to spend two days supporting their work in refugee camps. Other initiatives include pupils and staff teaching Latin to students at nearby Edgebarrow School, and outdoor activity sessions for local primary school children.

Oakham School

At Oakham School, service is embedded into the school calendar, with extracurricular activities included as part of the weekly timetable, plus weekends of activity, residentials and expeditions. With these regular opportunities beyond the academic sphere, Oakham aims to deliver the holistic education that prepares pupils for life beyond school. “Our service options of DofE, CCF, and Voluntary Action cultivate not just well-rounded students, but compassionate and capable young people prepared to serve and lead in a complex world,” says Oakham Director of Adventure, Matty Powell,

The Rutland school’s Connected Curriculum weaves together academic, pastoral and co-curricular experiences, with pupils actively encouraged to develop five essential life skills – Communication, Social, Self-management, Research, and Thinking. Service options offer the perfect place to develop all five. A team supports Matty Powell in delivering the service and adventurous learning programme, with qualified coordinators across DofE, CCF and VA, plus a specialist Adventurous Learning Co-ordinator.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are introduced early to the values and benefits of service and adventure through charity initiatives such as the Harvest Challenge, bake sales, charity bike ride and annual adventure camps. In Year 9, all pupils have a formal introduction to CCF, DofE and VA via a carousel of activities and experiences across the three terms. At the end of the year, they also experience an expedition, which they can count as their Bronze DofE Expedition.

From Year 10, pupils can choose whether to progress through the Silver and Gold Awards – with canoeing, cycling, and sailing, in addition to walking. They also have the flexibility to continue with CCF and VA by choosing all three service options during their weekly Activities sessions. This flexible pathway continues in Year 12. Even if pupils have never done DofE at Silver or Bronze levels, they can choose to complete their Gold DofE during this year, with an option to complete a CCF-organised expedition to Norway.

At each stage of the DofE awards journey, pupils are mentored by trained staff and older pupils who develop their leadership skills through its Young Leaders programme. CCF is an equally popular option from Year 10 onwards, with pupils participating in its programme of training and adventure via real-world challenges and unforgettable experiences – from fieldcraft exercises to annual camps.

Voluntary Action has seen a big growth in popularity, with pupils participating in an invigorated programme of volunteering. “We lead initiatives that nurture a culture of service, teamwork and emotional intelligence. Our projects range from intergenerational storytelling with dementia patients to sustainability efforts like uniform recycling,” says Head of Voluntary Action Monica Fernandez.

The Oakham School Foundation Project adds an entrepreneurial edge to service culture. Every Sixth Former is challenged to pitch, fundraise, and deliver projects that make a tangible difference to school life, working in connection with the Development Office. From installing solar lighting and restoring the local canal path to creating a time capsule legacy, the winning teams develop enterprise, collaboration and leadership skills to enrich school life and leave a legacy.

Oakham sees the encouragement of service activities as bringing a wide range of benefits. “These moments of challenge help our pupils grow personally and face obstacles with greater confidence,” says Matty Powell. “Leadership opportunities also play a crucial role in strengthening communication skills and self-assurance.” Parent feedback on the many service elements of school life is overwhelmingly positive, he adds. “Parents frequently highlight the character-building aspects of these programmes, especially their impact on resilience, leadership and responsibility.”

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Thinking AHEAD

*Caroline Jordan of **Headington Rye** in Oxford considers how best to support pupils to get the best out of their future*

When did you know what you wanted to be when you grew up? Did you set your sights on Oxbridge or the Ivy League at an early age? And, more importantly, how many times did that change before you eventually settled down to your current role?

The number of children who fix on a destination early in their educational journey and stick to that path without veering off in a different direction is very small. With the exception of truly vocational callings such as medicine, that number is likely to drop even more as the job market changes dramatically in response to new technologies and the changing world. Many of those starting school now will end up taking jobs which don't yet exist.

How, then, do we support them as educators? At Headington Rye Oxford, this starts early. We offer a very broad curriculum, with pupils studying a wide number of different subjects before starting to specialise as they select their GCSEs, with currently 28 subjects to choose from. We encourage them to consider balance and to leave their options open for further study, leaving them well qualified across a range of different disciplines and giving them the ability to change their minds.

At Sixth Form, most students start to have a clearer idea of what they want to do. It's important to support those who have a very clear path – for example, we provide specialist programmes for those considering Oxbridge, Law, Architecture and Medicine applications – and also those who are less clear about what they want to do.

Our pupils will meet representatives from different universities at our annual Higher Education evening and during special visits and talks, and also individuals working in a variety of different careers. We welcome back former students who share their educational and careers journeys, providing opportunities for work experience and networking as well as introducing them to the different possibilities. We get to know our pupils really well, so we can give them informed advice about the options which would suit them best. Alongside this, our tutors provide expert guidance for UCAS applications, one-to-one advice and support, interview practice and preparation for university admissions tests where appropriate.

ABOVE
Pupils at Headington Rye Oxford

An increasing interest in US universities has resulted in the development of our new specialised programme to support those who would like to apply. We provide them with advice on how to select courses and institutions and on which application route to select. We also offer in-depth individualised advice on athlete scholar applications from our Performance Director, a route which has seen many of our exceptional rowers leaving Headington Rye to continue rowing 'Crew' in the Ivy League universities.

This doesn't mean that the girls leaving Headington Rye to embark on the study of, for example, Liberal Arts at Harvard, History at Oxford or Cambridge, or Law at King's College London, are tied to following that path forever. The academic rigour of our courses, along with the critical and creative thinking and academic skills explicitly taught during their time at school, will stand them in good stead whether they are committed to one career or decide to diverge, to continue their studies or to explore new challenges in other disciplines. Whatever their futures, our job is to make sure they are ready.

CAROLINE JORDAN
Headteacher
Headington Rye Oxford

Framlingham
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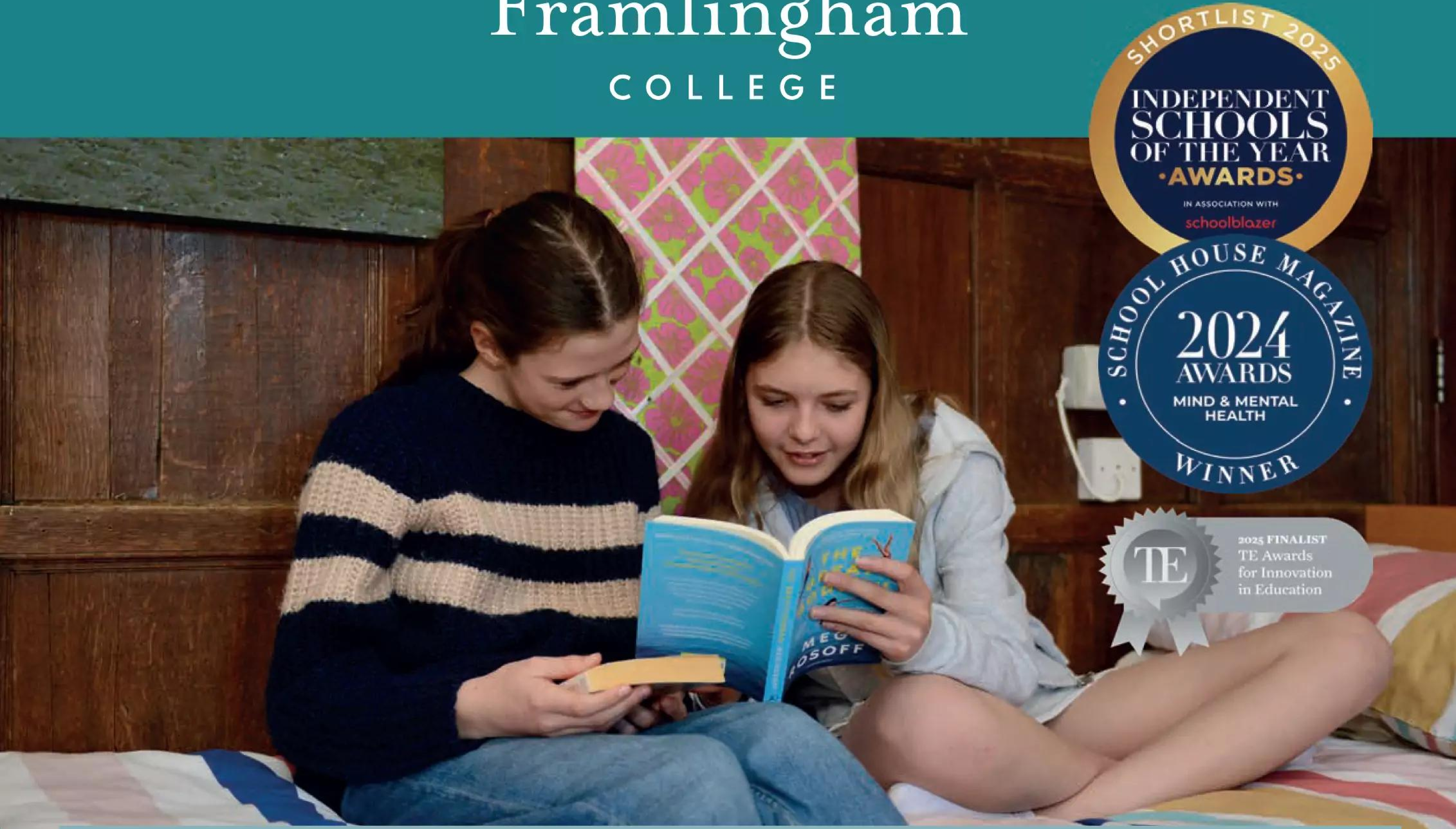
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OUTDOOR BOOST

Orlagh Hotchkiss of ***Concord College*** *on the benefits of outdoor education embedded in the curriculum.*

Outdoor Education has been a thriving aspect of the student curriculum at Concord College for the last 20 years. In a highly academic environment, students welcome the opportunity to challenge themselves outside of the classroom and the regular trips we take into nature also help to provide perspective and support positive mental wellbeing.

It is fundamentally important to help young people relate to each other and to the environment in a positive way. Young people need opportunities to risk getting things wrong, to be challenged to do things they genuinely don't believe are possible for them and to do so in a strongly supportive environment.

Outdoor learning provides students with the opportunity to find something truly difficult, to give and receive help from friends and ultimately to, as our head of outdoor education put it, "realise that they have achieved something that they initially thought was beyond them". They learn the benefits of teamwork, perseverance, and belief in yourself and others. We see improved camaraderie and self-worth. We watch as they learn to face new situations with confidence. The lateral thinking skills they develop can be applied to their academic studies and to their future lives.

"Young people need opportunities to risk getting things wrong and to do so in a strongly supportive environment"

LEFT
Concord College students enjoy outdoor challenges

Our programme involves every student right from day one. The school induction week features the challenge of our very own high-ropes course, an ice breaker in making friends but also a key moment to help new students warm to the idea of being challenged physically and mentally in the outdoors.

Every year group has a residential or outdoor pursuits experience, visiting beautiful environments in Wales, and Derbyshire, where they engage in activities such as rock climbing, mountain biking, canoeing and gorge walking. Our Lower School pupils (years 9-11) benefit from regular outdoor-pursuit activities as part of their core curriculum and take advantage of the beautiful local Shropshire Hills. Activities include rock climbing, mountain biking, hill walking, canoeing and high ropes.

Another element is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), which provides an excellent framework for those wanting to take things further, but we are careful to ensure that students who can't commit to all of the elements of the DofE are still exposed to the excitement and challenge of outdoor pursuits.

Whether the pinnacle of their achievement is a Gold DofE or navigating our local hills to arrive back for an ice cream, every student makes progress and achieves something to be proud of. One student recently recalled proudly the change in his strength, as he described the transformation from being someone who had to be helped up the hill by his team in Form 4 to being the one leading and encouraging others on a trip to Anglesey.

These experiences help our students to learn valuable skills and life lessons in an environment far removed from the classroom. Exploring problems in a practical capacity and overcoming challenges develops teamwork and refines communication skills. More than that, the experiences provide lasting memories, stories to share and a chance to view classmates in an entirely different light.

ORLAGH HOTCHKISS
Assistant Principal (Co-curricular, outreach & inclusion)
Concord College

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Sporting CHANCES

The Director of Sport at ***St George's Ascot*** *on its enhanced swimming programme and increased provision in traditionally 'male' games*

Swimming is one of the most demanding sports a young person can pursue. It requires precision, power, time management and grit. That's why, this year, we've taken our swimming provision to the next level.

Our Performance Swimming Programme offers talented young swimmers a high-performance coaching environment while ensuring they continue to thrive in the classroom. This September we will welcome the first group of girls onto our elite swim programme with training sessions integrated into the school day and throughout the week, enabling the girls to strike a good balance between academic focus and athletic ambition

I am excited to welcome Nicky Matthews as Head Coach for our Performance Swimming Programme. Nicky has extensive experience developing young swimmers to a national level – her approach is purposeful and professional, but also incredibly supportive. She coaches with drive, challenging and championing young athletes to take their next steps with confidence.

In parallel with our swimming development, we've also expanded opportunities in cricket and football, giving girls a chance to explore sports they may not have considered their own. Cricket is now a key part of our summer and winter calendars, following the installation of our indoor hardball cricket nets last May. We are supported by a coaching partnership with Royal Ascot Cricket Club.

> **"A favourite part of my job is seeing a girl realise what she is capable of – these are the moments that build character, not just athleticism"**

ABOVE
Swimming at St George's Ascot

Our girls are thriving in matches, developing technical skills, tactical understanding and loving the camaraderie that cricket brings. We have embedded specialist coaching, competitive fixtures and a pathway for those who want to pursue the game seriously. The same is true for football, which has seen a sharp rise in interest and talent. With growing national visibility in the women's game, it felt essential to give St George's girls the chance to be part of that movement.

While our Performance Swimming Programme, football and cricket may be the latest additions to feature in our rich and diverse sports programme, we are continually evolving our provision to ensure every girl finds her space to shine. From netball to tennis, dance to badminton, athletics and beyond, our girls have the chance to enjoy, lead and inspire.

A favourite part of my job is seeing a girl realise what she is capable of. Sometimes that moment happens in a fixture, sometimes it's in a training session, sometimes it's just the quiet pride of knowing she kept going when something felt hard. These are the moments that build character, not just athleticism.

I have experienced time and time again that when girls are given the opportunity to lead, to fail safely and try again, they discover they are capable of more than they ever imagined – and that is what sport in schools should be about. I want every girl to leave us knowing they can stay in sport in whatever form they choose, whether that is through competition, coaching, volunteering or simply for personal enjoyment.

I am so proud to be part of a school that is investing in the future, and doing so with purpose.

SOPHIE APPLEBY
Director of Sport
St George's Ascot

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MORE THAN **SPORT**

Nick Drane, Head Golf Coach at ***Loretto*** *in Edinburgh, on its commitment to helping young players to achieve their full potential through golf*

Rory McIlroy's recent triumph at the Masters was so much more than a sporting milestone – it was a masterclass in perseverance and determination. His victory serves as a powerful reminder that, in golf, there's no such thing as a perfect game. Success lies in the ability to maintain focus and composure, adapt to setbacks, and to demonstrate the resilience to keep moving forward.

Golf is more than just a game – it's a teacher. It sharpens focus, instils patience, and fosters mental toughness. Beyond these invaluable life skills, the sport offers countless benefits. Time spent outdoors improves overall mood and lifts the spirit, while its physical demands enhance coordination, strength and endurance. It's unsurprising that schools across the country have started to include golf within their educational and extracurricular offerings.

Loretto's Golf Academy has been at the forefront of this movement. Established in 2002 as the first of its kind within an independent school, it continues to set the standard for excellence in golf education. The game – and the qualities that it inspires – aligns with the school's wider commitment to developing young people in mind, body, and spirit.

Today, Loretto Golf Academy welcomes golfers of all levels, from enthusiastic beginners to aspiring professionals. Three distinct training programmes – Club, Team and Reds – ensure that every pupil receives tailored coaching from five highly experienced PGA professionals. With access to top-class facilities and match play opportunities on some of the world's finest courses, including on Scotland's Golf Coast, each pupil is empowered to compete and realise their potential. Of course, it's not all play. Pupils balance their time in the Golf Academy and at tournaments with their studies, extracurricular activities and additional responsibilities – mind, body and spirit in action.

As the home of golf, it's essential that a love for the game is preserved, so that it can continue to be enjoyed across generations. For its legacy to carry on, fostering a love for the sport from a young age is key. Many golf clubs have initiatives in place, encouraging children to take up the game. Loretto presents a unique offering, being the only independent school in the country to host its own World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) tournament – the Loretto Junior Golf Tour – which is open to all aspiring junior golfers, not just those at the school. Additionally, scholarships are available for those looking to combine an exceptional education with their golfing prowess.

ABOVE
Loretto student

> **"Golf is more than just a game – it's a teacher. It sharpens focus, instils patience, and fosters mental toughness"**

Historically, golf has been perceived as a male-dominated sport, leaving women underrepresented. Loretto is committed to changing this – inspiring girls to embrace the game, challenge themselves, and seize every opportunity to achieve their potential. One third of our Golf Academy members are female – a statistic we are proud of and determined to continue growing.

Over the years, countless Lorettonians have gone on to achieve great success, testament to the talent that is nurtured here. Whether they go on to professional careers, secure college scholarships or continue to play for pleasure, their individual journeys reflect the impact of including golf as part of a holistic education. More than just a sport, golf fosters focus, resilience, and a love for physical activity – helping to shape well-rounded, confident young people.

NICK DRANE

Head Golf Coach
Loretto

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ABOVE *Pupils at Queen Ethelburga's*

Intelligence THINKING

The Academic Director at ***Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate*** *believes it's vital for schools to have a clear approach to the use of AI*

> **"Our approach has been to see AI a tool to enhance and support learners and teachers "**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here to stay. Schools cannot afford to ignore it and are doing students a disservice if they do not discuss and agree their approach to its use. At QE, our approach has been to see this as a tool to enhance and support learners and teachers.

Why wouldn't we? It is already embedded in daily life in different forms – whether it be driverless cars, facial recognition or suggested viewing on streaming platforms. We also know that AI is increasingly being utilised across different career sectors, from medicine to marketing, so we need to increase student exposure to its potential in their own future working lives.

After deciding on our approach, we wrote a policy (helped by an AI model, of course) outlining to staff not only how AI can be used by teachers, leaders and support staff but also our responsibilities in using it. Here we considered ethics, data privacy and bias. This is the same message that was then repeated to students in a series of assemblies, delivered in an age-appropriate way.

There has been an emphasis with all students under 18 to use AI models that do not require a log in and to ensure they appreciate that they should not be entering personal identifiable information into any website if they do not know how it will be used. Younger students have worked with their teachers in lessons using AI as a class, but for the older ones, the focus is on encouraging them to experiment and learn how it can help them – but always in a controlled and managed environment.

As we began to get to grips with how AI can and is being used by staff and students – and as various guidance began to be published and updated – we produced documentation for students, helping them to better understand when it is (and isn't) acceptable to use AI in their education, how to appropriately reference its use in coursework, and how to work with teachers to adopt the best strategies.

Further work was done with teachers on how to use AI most effectively, ensuring the use was conversational, crafting the most effective prompts and then building on these to train the AI model to produce the right response. As teachers – already used to articulating to students what we want them to do, observing their responses and then amending our instructions and guidance – we are ideally placed to be able to train AI models. Our academic staff have also been able to opt into a range of CPD training sessions. Here, they have been learning how to model AI best practice in the classroom, use it to personalise their teaching and student feedback, and harness its power to manage intense workloads in a way that gives them more contact time with students.

Recognising the importance of keeping pace with this rapidly developing area and ensuring that AI is seen as a tool for people to use, not fear, we created and recruited a new role – Head of Cognitive Science and Digital Literacy. As an experienced teacher within Creative Media and an enthusiastic user of technology, Jason Sharma-Pay is ideally placed to not only help us further develop our digital strategy but to better understand how human creativity, empathy, emotional intelligence and capacity for critical thought can ensure AI enhances teaching and learning and, ultimately, student outcomes.

KEVIN OLDERSHAW

Academic Director

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Sixth form DIFFERENCE

*The Deputy Head Academic at **Tudor Hall School** discusses the benefits of an all-girl environment in the important and exciting sixth form years*

Sixth Form is arguably the most exhilarating phase of education, and the right choice can make all the difference. It is the perfect time to make the move into a post-16 environment that is exactly the right fit for each individual student, to equip them with the skills, knowledge and self-confidence to succeed, whether their path leads to university, an apprenticeship or launching into a career or entrepreneurship.

So why choose an all-girls Sixth Form? There is no shortage of evidence around why girls in single-sex settings do better than their peers. This includes FFT Datalab analysis findings (as reported in the Guardian in May 2024) confirming that girls at girls' schools outperform boys and girls in co-educational settings and outdo boys in all-boys' schools – equivalent to 10% higher grades in 2023, even after adjusting for background characteristics.

ABOVE *Sixth formers at Tudor Hall*

> **“There is no shortage of evidence around why girls in single-sex settings do better than their peers”**

Moving from co-education to an environment where every aspect of school life is tailored to provide the best experience for every girl can be truly transformational. At Tudor Hall, our all-girl Sixth Form experience, called T6, is designed to give girls a unique place and time to shine. Flora joined the Tudor Hall Sixth Form from a large, co-ed boarding school. “I looked at Tudor as a Sixth Form option because they offered a rare combination of my preferred A levels. And moving to all-girls has been fantastic in so many more ways than simply the subject choice. I have benefited hugely from smaller classes, prefer a learning environment where the social pressures of boys have been stripped away in day-to-day school life, and I have embraced a range of co-curricular opportunities with far greater gusto than I did in my co-ed school.”

Every Sixth Form has its own unique approach to curriculum, co-curriculum and pastoral care. The T6 mindset draws on the philosophy of High Performance Learning (HPL). Tudor Hall is one of only 15 independent schools in the UK working towards the prestigious HPL World Class School accreditation based on cognitive and neuroscience research.

It's also important to consider subject choice and wider support throughout the Sixth Form journey. Tudor's Sixth Form timetable is not finalised until girls have chosen their desired subjects, meaning that individuals are able to study combinations of A levels – from the 27 subjects on offer – that may be impossible elsewhere. The team of tutors, expert teachers, plus the Head of Professional Guidance and the Head of Sixth Form help each girl to successfully navigate Sixth Form and thrive.

Flora has dived right in. She says: “I am completing the Leith's School of Cookery diploma, doing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award and have rekindled my love of drama and singing.”

An all-girls' environment can make a huge and lasting difference in those exciting Sixth Form years.

SIMON SMITH

Simon Smith, Deputy Head Academic
Tudor Hall School

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ABOVE
Worth School

> **"Through workshops, guest speakers, reflection essays and portfolios, students are encouraged to ask what true leadership looks like"**

High GOALS

*Matthew Doggett of **Worth School** describes its mission to combine academic rigour with strong values to bring out the very best in students*

Whether a student continues their journey with us from Year 11 or joins for a fresh start, they immediately become part of a Sixth Form community that is both close-knit and supported by the wider school. It's the best of both worlds: independence and leadership opportunities in a setting that still feels like family. As one parent recently put it: 'My child has never been happier or more motivated. Worth sees the whole person and helps them flourish'.

At the heart of our Sixth Form provision is our belief in education with heart and soul. That means forming not only the intellect but also the person – instilling the values and habits that will last a lifetime. In a world where 16–18-year-olds face enormous social, emotional and academic pressures, this concept has arguably never been more vital. At Worth, Community is not just a buzzword but one of our six Benedictine values, alongside Humility, Silence, Worship, Stewardship, and Service. These values shape every part of school life and ensure that our young people emerge not only capable but compassionate, grounded and generous of spirit.

A key part of our distinctive Sixth Form experience is the Spencer Building, a dedicated Sixth Form centre designed to support both academic focus and social development. With its spacious study areas, welcoming common room and fully equipped lecture theatre, it provides a grown-up environment where students can thrive. While our Sixth Form students remain closely connected to the wider school, the Spencer Building gives them a space of their own, encouraging independence, self-discipline and a mature approach to learning.

One of the most powerful tools we use to foster this outward-looking approach is our innovative Leadership Formation programme. Launched for all Year 12 students, it has been a game-changer. Through workshops, guest speakers, reflection essays and portfolios, students are encouraged to ask what true leadership looks like – and how they can live it. Importantly, this process redefines the idea of what it means to lead. It's not about popularity, but about integrity, responsibility and the desire to serve others.

Although not every student will become a prefect, every participant in the Leadership Formation programme is recognised for their growth and contribution, with formal accreditation and real-life skills they will carry far beyond school. More than that, they become servant leaders – young people who understand that leadership is about lifting others, setting an example and building real relationships grounded in respect, empathy and strength of character.

In an age where young people are often encouraged to look inward, we teach them to look outward – to connect, contribute and care. Community and altruism are not add-ons to academic success; they are essential to building fulfilled lives. At Worth School, Sixth Form is where intellect meets heart, and ambition meets service. Our ambition is for a place where young people don't just achieve – they become. Ⓔ

MATTHEW DOGGETT
Assistant Head (Sixth Form)
Worth School

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ABOVE
Pupil at MPW

SHAKESPEARE'S CO-PILOT

*James Barton of **MPW Group** on why AI is a powerful and positive force in education, but always in a supporting role*

Would Shakespeare have been more or less powerful with an AI co-pilot? Would his output have multiplied, or would the poetry have thinned? To prompt or not to prompt is not the point – the question is whether the tool serves learning or takes over.

From the Jacquard loom to Babbage and Lovelace, from Mary Shelley's laboratory to Turing's conversational test, we've seen radical technologies since before the Bard. In education it feels novel because the AI rollout is happening now. The present twist is scale. Large language models can draft, summarise and simulate at speed.

The parental voice of concern is justifiable. If a machine performs the heavy lifting, does our own intelligence slacken? Struggle is part of learning and the temptation to outsource that struggle is real. Institutions harbour their own fears. What if AI becomes so fluent that erroneous or inauthentic submissions slip past detection, eroding trust in assessment? These risks are not imaginary but call for design, not drama.

Education is not the efficient production of tidy answers, but the formation of curiosity, integrity and judgement. Keep that in view and AI remains a tool, and even a co-pilot, but not the tutor. Ring-fence its use through transparent prompts, declared outputs and clear limits. Build assessments that prize process as well as end product – more in-class writing, viva-style orals, iterative portfolios and applied tasks that require students to show their working as well as their results. Good design makes misuse harder and learning stickier.

Used well, AI is genuine value-added. In secondary schools, it can generate retrieval practice, adapt reading levels and offer immediate, low-stakes feedback. For pupils learning in another language, it can clarify instructions without lowering the bar. In universities, it can annotate articles, propose code comments, draft lab pre-work and produce alternative explanations for stubborn concepts. Think of AI as rehearsal room – a place to try an argument, hear it back and refine it before the performance that counts.

> "No model reads a room and spots the student who hides brilliance behind quietness or turns a near-miss into an 'aha' moment"

AI will certainly replace tasks. Marking routine quizzes, preparing differentiated materials and providing first-pass feedback are jobs machines already handle well. But no model reads a room and spots the student who hides brilliance behind quietness or turns a near-miss into an 'aha' moment. This means the teacher role shifts from solo lecturer to conductor of attention and designer of practice – teacher-led, now tool-enabled. Prospero keeps command of the stage not because he owns the book but because he understands the play.

In the workplace, large firms now deploy secure, white-labelled models to cut drudgery and raise quality. Graduates will meet such systems on day one. Failing to teach AI literacy would leave them under-prepared. If Shakespeare had an AI co-pilot, the task would still be his – he would choose the question, test the line and own the judgement.

At MPW we learned during the pandemic that technology can preserve momentum, but teachers sustain learning. That lesson now shapes a clear approach. We use AI where it demonstrably adds value – personalising practice, widening timely feedback and supporting EAL learners – while keeping authorship, fairness and the teacher-student relationship at the centre. Tools extend us, teachers transform us. Keep the craft in charge and Shakespeare's co-pilot earns a seat but not the quill.

JAMES BARTON

Global Director
MPW Group

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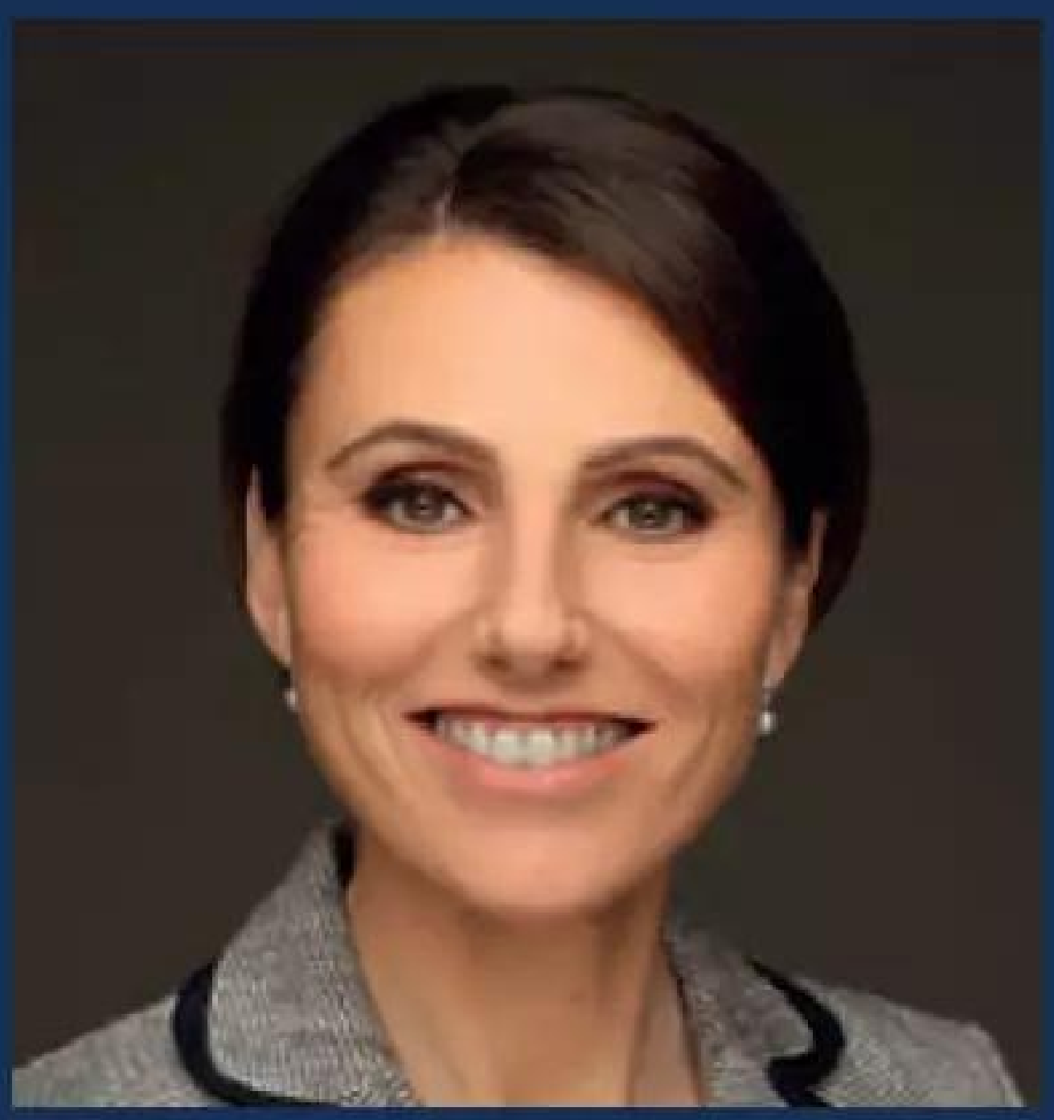

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ABOVE *Learning at TASIS England*

Unique learning JOURNEYS

*Joshua Clark of **TASIS England** on how schools can use technology to turn learning into a personal journey for every student*

Education has always evolved with technology – from the humble abacus and chalkboard to the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR). Today, schools are focusing on how to provide personalised learning while still maintaining rigorous academic standards.

For international schools, technology supports learning for students from diverse cultural, linguistic and academic backgrounds. Schools with students from all over the world must consider different levels of academic preparation, cultural perspectives and language proficiency. In these settings, personalisation becomes a critical focus to ensure every learner is both challenged and supported. One student may arrive excelling in mathematics but still developing confidence in English. Another could come with strong language skills but limited experience in inquiry-based science. Technology allows teachers to adapt accordingly. It also creates opportunities for students to work at their maximum level of interest, ability and pace.

Personalised learning gives more ownership, as students shape their education through elective choices, interdisciplinary projects and inquiry-driven coursework. Technology also provides pathways to adapt pace or explore interests. Adaptive platforms adjust tasks to suit each learner's level, while STEM labs, maker spaces and robotics programs encourage students to test ideas, design solutions, and express creativity in ways that align with their personal strengths.

> **"Technology creates opportunities for students to work at their maximum level of interest, ability and pace"**

As personalisation increases, the role of the teacher becomes more critical. Teachers curate resources and delivery methods to ensure learning standards are met while considering how to differentiate based on the learning opportunities and needs in the classroom. They guide students in using resources and offer feedback instantaneously as well as over time. Most importantly, teachers help students discern when technology should be used and when more traditional methods – discussion, reflection or hands-on activities – are more effective.

When technology is implemented thoughtfully, it can unlock opportunities. Adaptive software provides tailored modules and exams can triangulate the edge of a student's understanding. Robotics, coding and 3D printing allow students to be curious and develop essential problem-solving skills, while interactive displays make abstract concepts more concrete.

Technology is not a panacea and over-reliance on devices risks limiting human interaction. Students may have differing levels of prior exposure to technology, creating inequities in skill and confidence. Data privacy and ethical questions around AI demand careful consideration, too.

Every learning community must consider its own goals, resources and needs. Clear guidelines around device use and a common understanding of the role of technology ensure that it enhances rather than overwhelms the learning process. Ultimately, personalisation works best when innovation is balanced with the human connections – it is in that balance that the most meaningful teaching and learning takes place. Ⓔ

JOSHUA CLARK

Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions

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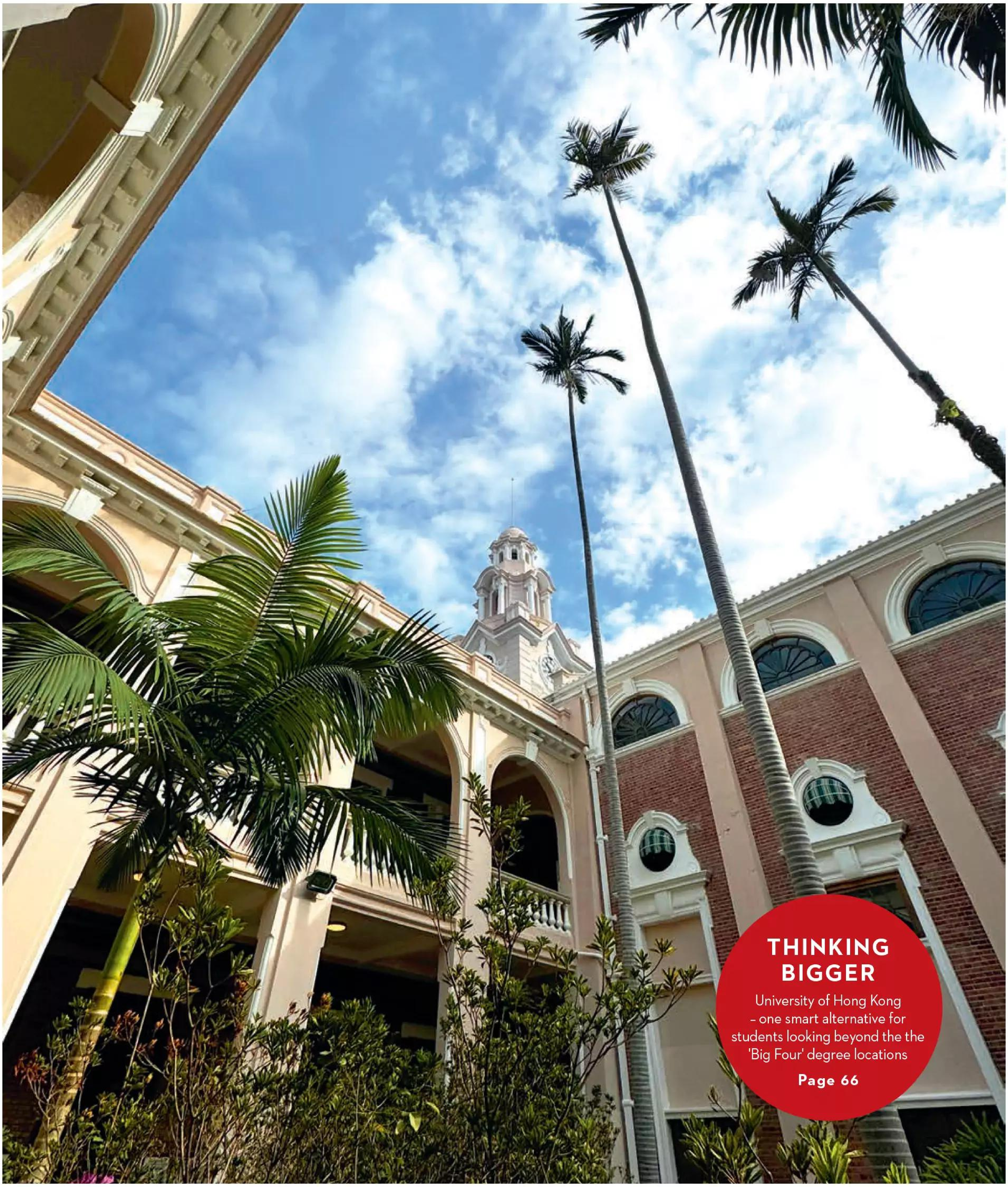
Sixth Form

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGES P. 66 THE FUTURE OF ARTS SUBJECTS P. 71



THINKING BIGGER

University of Hong Kong – one smart alternative for students looking beyond the the 'Big Four' degree locations

Page 66

Beyond the BIG FOUR

University options beyond the 'Big Four' prestige locations are coming into play, says ***Jessica Harris****, Head of Quintessentially Education*

The UK, US, Canada, and Australia have dominated the global education market for decades. This 'Big Four' offered both world-renowned institutions and the promise of long-term opportunity for aspirational students. But an unmistakable shift is taking place in international education, opening up competition for global talent like never before.

As a dual UK and US agency, we are supporting increasing numbers of students looking to a broader range of programmes across new regions. While demand for the UK and US remains high, there has been a significant increase in families casting the net wider.

WHY THE RISE OF ALTERNATIVES?

A host of reasons, including migratory pressures, rising tuition fees, demographic shifts, political and regulatory changes, and credibility of post-study pathways, have led ambitious students to question previous assumptions and consider alternative places to study.

Policy and visa shifts can disrupt the best laid plans. Recent changes to student visa processing times and post-study work rules in some countries have created uncertainty. For example, in Australia, visa fees jumped to AUD $1,600 last year, with a further proposed rise for this year. Other policy changes have meant post-study work is now capped at two years. In the US, meanwhile, heightened scrutiny on visa applications, evolving documentation requirements, and shifting timelines for F-1 processing have made it increasingly important for students to prepare early and remain adaptable.

Rising costs across the 'Big Four' means students and their families are recognising potentially better value elsewhere. Tuition fees in these four countries can exceed £50,000 per year before living expenses. In countries such as Germany, Austria or the Netherlands, tuition is minimal by comparison, even for international students. In Germany, for example, most public universities charge no tuition fees or request very modest semester contributions of around €250–€350 for undergraduate study. There are exceptions such as Baden-Württemberg, where non-EU students

> “Rising costs in the ‘Big Four’ nations means students and their families are recognising potentially better value universities elsewhere”

pay about €1,500 per semester, but that’s still a fraction of UK or US tuition fees.

Growing global prestige is another factor influencing students’ desire to consider a broader set of university locations. While the UK and the US continue to dominate the top of the QS World University Rankings, an increasing number of European and Asian institutes such as ETH Zurich and the National University of Singapore (placed seventh and eighth in QS World University Rankings 2025) are appearing. These institutions are attracting world-class faculty and securing international research partnerships as their prestige becomes more recognised.

Cultural and professional opportunities are also seen as another factor. Studying outside the Big Four can immerse students in dynamic, fast-growing regions – whether it’s joining the tech ecosystem of Singapore, learning in multilingual Brussels or building professional connections in Dubai’s thriving business scene. Such experiences can differentiate graduates in a competitive job market.

These locations may also bring flexibility for transfers and postgraduate study. Certainly, a degree from a respected university in Europe or Asia can act as a springboard to postgraduate study in the UK or US, offering an alternative route to the same long-term goals.

ABOVE
ETH Zurich

BELOW
SDA Bocconi University Campus

EUROPE – AFFORDABLE EXCELLENCE

From Germany's tuition-free public universities to the Netherlands' innovative English-taught programmes, Europe offers an exceptional return on investment. Institutions such as TU Munich, Heidelberg University, and Wageningen University are beginning to really rival their UK/US counterparts in research output and graduate employability.

And for students who coveted Harvard's government, public policy and economics courses, Sciences Po is an excellent alternative. This prestigious French university, which has long attracted many of Europe's political elite (President Macron included) has campuses in Paris and a number of historic French towns and teaches many undergraduate courses in English.

For those pursuing a STEM pathway, a great alternative to MIT in Boston or Imperial College in London is the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. Also known as TU Delft, this public university is much cheaper than MIT. The annual fees for international students are the equivalent of approximately $18,600 USD per year, compared to MIT's $57,790 USD, and the town has much lower living costs than Boston. Bocconi University in Milan is a fantastic alternative to both the University of Pennsylvania and LSE in London – offering a similar range of economics, finance and management courses – while IE University in Madrid has similarly good courses in business, management and international relations.

And for students who want something collegiate and historic with English as the primary language, proximity to the UK, and generous post-study work visas, Ireland's Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin offer a seamless cultural transition with strong academic credentials.

ASIA – RISING MARKETS

Regional hubs such as National University of Singapore and University of Hong Kong combine academic excellence with access to the fastest-growing markets in the world – ideal for future leaders in business, finance, and technology. Meanwhile, Dubai and Abu Dhabi now host an impressive roster of international branch campuses for leading UK, US, and Australian universities. This means globally recognised degrees in a strategically located and cosmopolitan environment.

> “Learning in multilingual Brussels or building professional connections in Dubai – such experiences differentiate graduates in a competitive job market”

For instance, University of Birmingham Dubai offers the same UK-accredited degrees as its home campus, and with a strong focus on business, engineering, and computer science. Heriot-Watt University Dubai is renowned for its business and engineering programmes, while in Abu Dhabi, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) stands out for its liberal arts approach and strong research profile, combining US academic traditions with an immersive global outlook.

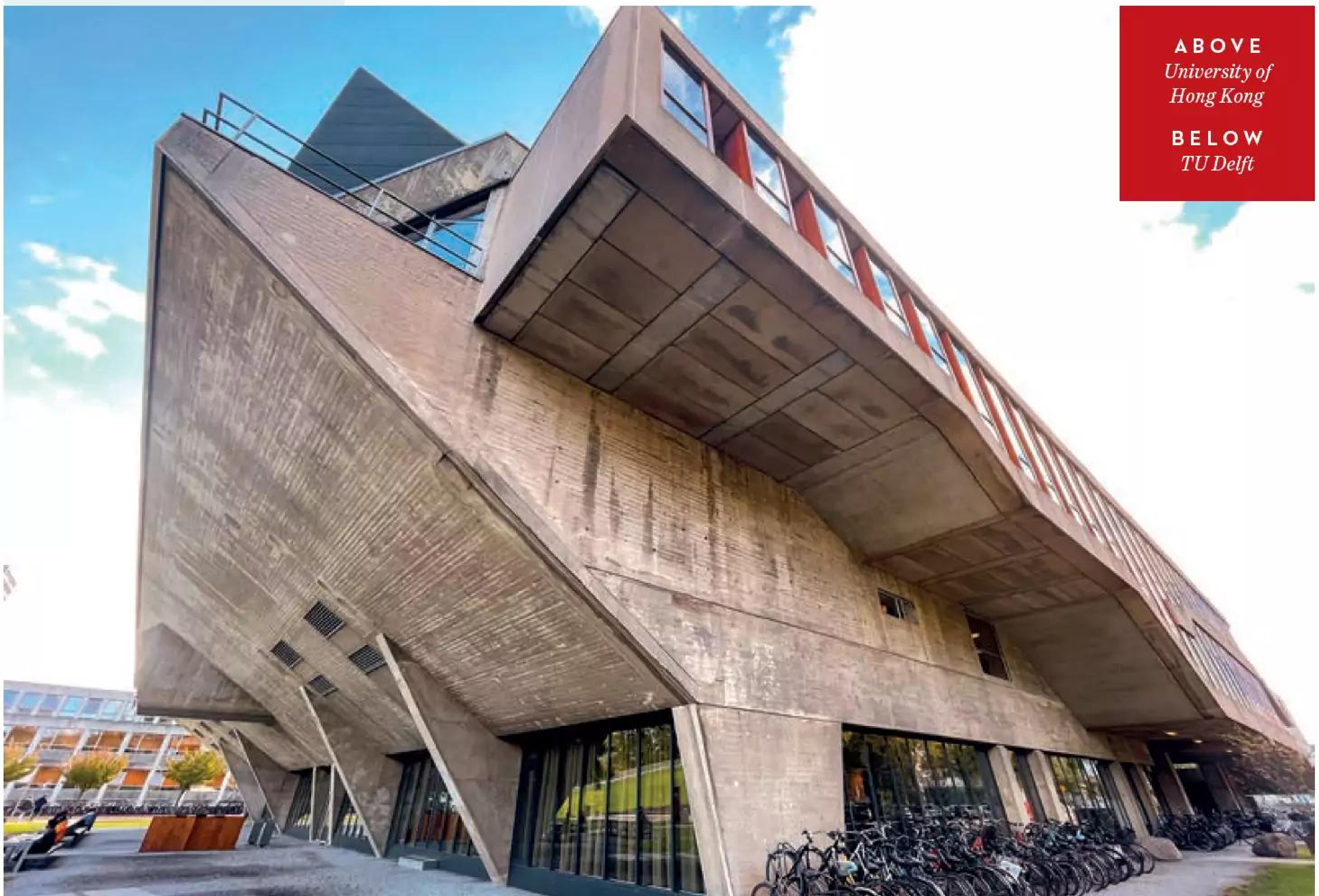
For families who value the prestige of a UK or US education but seek a warmer climate, dynamic job market, and lower living costs than London or New York, these UAE campuses may be an astute choice – particularly for those students interested in internships and industry connections in the Gulf’s thriving sectors, which include technology, construction, hospitality and renewables.

Exploring beyond the Big Four is about widening possibilities. Students can get expert help in creating shortlists tailored to their academic goals, career aspirations and lifestyle preferences. At Quintessentially Education, our advice to students is to ensure they choose universities that are not just reputable but right for them. So, alongside the tangible values such as tuition costs, living expenses and graduate outcomes, think about the admissions process and the all-important lifestyle components. It can be especially helpful to talk to other students who have attended shortlisted institutions for firsthand feedback.

The good news for students is that a prestigious degree remains within reach, regardless of geopolitics. The key lies in having an informed and flexible strategy that balances ambition with pragmatism. The best higher education plans can evolve if the situation changes by keeping a range of potential options on the table.

ABOVE *University of Hong Kong*

BELOW *TU Delft*



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Career READY

Alex Swart-Wilson of ***Bishop's Stortford College*** *on giving students careers advice that empowers them in a super-competitive job landscape*

Towards the end of last year I asked a colleague how her son was faring now that he had left university and was heading into the world of work. He had a 2:1 Honours Degree from a Russell Group University and I was expecting him to find the job market receptive to the skills and dedication that I had come to know during his school years. The truth was that he was struggling to find employment in his chosen career.

It does not take much time to research the bottleneck in graduate recruitment. Statistics vary on the subject, but if you look at the latest set of figures they say that 98.5% of all graduate job applications are rejected. So what can schools do to help students be prepared for this challenge – one that is, for many of them, three to four years away from the end of the school days? Long gone are the days when three A levels were enough; students need more to stand out from their peers.

LEFT
Sixth formers at Bishop's Stortford College

> **"Employers talk about the need for school leavers to demonstrate what they have done for themselves, rather than what others have done for them"**

Employers talk about the need for school leavers and graduates to demonstrate what they have done for themselves, rather than what others have done for them. Gaining paid work at a young age, volunteering and work experience can all demonstrate this in some form. It gives students insight into the workplace, a wider range of suitable skills and demonstrates a commitment to personal growth. If a student has been doing this since they were 16, or even earlier, then the benefit it will bring them by the time they leave university will be significant. Secondly, it is imperative that students choose the right option for when they leave school. The most obvious example in this regard is choice of degree for those going to university. Well over a quarter of students going to university say they picked the wrong degree. This has a significant, detrimental impact on their outcomes when they leave, (assuming they haven't dropped out, that is).

Personalised, one-to-one advice from a careers professional can be transformational in empowering students with the confidence and skills to identify their own strengths, interests and priorities in life, all of which are the primary focus for the Futures team at Bishop's Stortford College. With unlimited access to careers guidance, students at the College are supported to take ownership of the process of exploring the options that suit them. This enables informed decision-making, not just for this one important decision but to manage every step of their career. However, what is equally important is that students broaden their horizons around going to university. Employers are increasingly recruiting straight from school and reducing their graduate intake. Students need to be aware of this, and the potential opportunities this opens up for them.

Lastly, while AI screening has taken a new role in selecting job candidates – and getting through this process is a challenge – the importance of the face-to-face interview should not be neglected. This is the still the most important part of any interview process for top graduate employers. From the first handshake to the final question the candidate asks, tailored interview preparation from specialists, and up to date advice from real-world professionals on what it really takes to impress, will make a profound difference.

ALEX SWART-WILSON
Deputy Head (Sixth Form)
Bishop's Stortford College

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- Collect a free copy of the UK Boarding School Directory

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Saturday 15 November 11.00 to 16.00 | Dubai – Le Royal Meridien Resort & Spa

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Contact: **Sara Sparling** Director & Education Consultant *enquiries@andersoneducation.co.uk*

Register to join us: ***andersoneducation.co.uk***

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

Bedford School

Head: James Hodgson
Location: Bedfordshire
School type: Prep, Boys, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 7-18 years

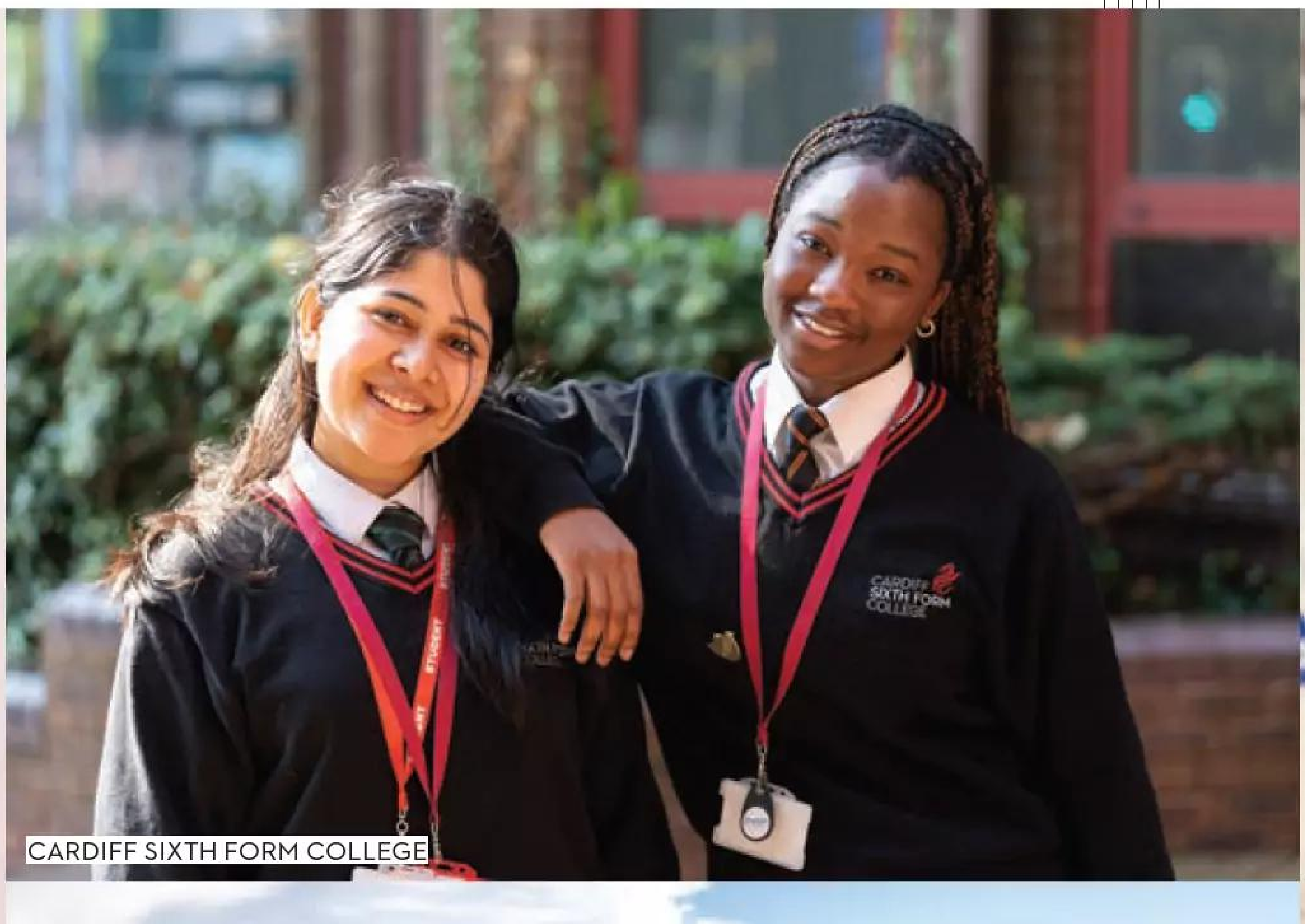
At Bedford School, we are experts in boys. We nurture confident and independent boys with a sense of true leadership and ambition. We believe in the power of an outstanding holistic education to enable boys to become good men.
bedfordschool.org.uk

Bishop's Stortford College

Head: Mr John Maguire
Location: Hertfordshire
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 3-18 years

The Modern Face of Independent Education is epitomised by Bishop's Stortford College, a dynamic, forward-thinking all-through school from 3 to 18 years. We promote academic excellence, equipping pupils with the skills necessary for future success, whilst emphasising scholarship, strong character-forming values, and community, ensuring that every pupil develops a sense of belonging.
bishopsstortfordcollege.org

LANCING COLLEGE


CARDIFF SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

BRENTWOOD SCHOOL

Brentwood School

Head: Michael Bond
Location: Essex
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 3-18 years

Brentwood School is the only UK Top 10 IB school with boarding that is co-educational, close to London and has two other Sixth Form Pathways to choose from (A-Levels and BTEC). In 2025, we open our new state-of-the-art boarding house, expanding our boarding and with all rooms being single with en-suite shower rooms.

brentwoodschool.co.uk

Bromsgrove School

Head: Michael Punt
Location: Worcestershire
School type: Co-Ed, Prep,Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 2 - 18 years

Bromsgrove offers an all-round education, combining academic excellence with a richness of opportunity. Pupils engage enthusiastically with knowledge, embrace new ideas and are intellectually stimulated.Bromsgrove School's results are impressive, but Bromsgrove is much more than a place to get good grades, it prides itself on being a happy school where children of all ages can thrive

bromsgrove-school.co.uk

Cardiff Sixth Form College

Head: Mr Tom Arrand
Location: Wales
School type: Sixth Form
Age range: 14 - 17 years

Cardiff Sixth Form College has been ranked the top independent school in the UK over the past 12 years and offers both GCSE and A Level courses. The school has two campuses in Cardiff and Cambridge. 91% of students achieved A*-A grades. Teaching staff are all highly experienced with many having been examiners or inspectors in other schools.

ccoex.com

Caterham School

Head: Mr Ceri Jones
Location: Surrey
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Sixth Form
Age range: 4 - 18 years

Academic Excellence, Innovation and Pastoral Care: Caterham School excels academically, ranked second school in the UK by The Times for GCSEs. Caterham boasts outstanding GCSE and A Level results, a progressive teaching approach, and dedicated digital and innovation curiculum ensuring students are well-prepared for top universities in the UK (incl. Oxford and Cambridge), the US (including recent Ivy League full scholarships) .

caterhamschool.co.uk

Dollar Academy

Head: Mr Ian Munro
Location: Scotland
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 5-18 years

Dollar Academy is a multi-award winning school, with a strong record of sending pupils to top universities in the UK and the US (Harvard, Stanford, Columbia and NYU since 2022). Dollar offers 35 academic subjects, complemented by over 120 co-curricular

DOLLAR ACADEMY

CATERHAM SCHOOL

activities, with an outstanding reputation for sport, music and art.
dollaracademy.org.uk

Eastbourne College

Head: Tom Lawson
Location: East Sussex
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 9m - 18 years

Just one hour from London Gatwick by train or car, Eastbourne College provides a full boarding education focused on healthy living for healthy learning. In a stunning, safe location yards from a national park and picturesque seafront, superb facilities support outstanding academic and cocurricular opportunities that develop rounded young people.
eastbourne-college.co.uk

Kingswood School Bath

Head: Mr Andrew Gordon-Brown
Location: Bath
School type: Co-Ed, Senior
Age range: 11-19 years

Kingswood School is situated on a magnificent 120-acre site in Lansdown, Bath, and offers an inclusive and welcoming boarding and day community. The school's approach blends academic excellence with a strong emphasis on the arts, sport, and pastoral care, while maintaining traditional values and a forward-thinking mindset. Kingswood provides an environment where intellectual rigour, creativity, and compassion thrive, ensuring that every pupil is encouraged to reach their full potential.

At the heart of Kingswood's pastoral system are its Houses, where dedicated staff provide daily support and guidance. The school's outstanding pastoral care, as rated in the latest ISI report, is highly valued by both pupils and parents. Each pupil is assigned a personal tutor who mentors them, helping to set and achieve personal targets while encouraging independent learning.

Boarders from over 20 nations contribute to a vibrant, diverse environment, helping pupils develop into globally minded individuals. Dedicated staff encourage each pupil to ignite their full potential, offering guidance and support every step of the way.

Renowned as one of the South West's top schools for sport, Kingswood pupils compete at national and international levels. The school also runs a rich co-curricular programme, with over 100 activities each week – from creative arts and leadership opportunities to specialist clubs – ensuring every child can discover and develop their talents.

Kingswood pupils leave well-prepared not only for university but also for life beyond, confident in their abilities and character.
kingswood.bath.sch.uk

Lancing College

Head: Dr Scott Crawford
Location: West Sussex
School type: Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 13-18 years

Inspiring teaching underpinned by superb, individualised pastoral care. Spaciousness: intellectual, physical and aspirational. Medical, vet, architecture, engineering and musical pathways, a stunning Chapel and a truly holistic education in a cosmopolitan school with 60% boarders.
lancingcollege.co.uk

MONKTON COMBE SCHOOL

Monkton Combe School

Head: Bradley Salisbury (from January 2026)
Location: Somerset
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 2-18 years

Monkton focuses on the journey of each individual in a way that is tangibly different. As pioneers in pastoral tracking, Monkton holds true to the belief that self-discovery is the key to success; not only do happy children learn but they also explore their strengths and weaknesses, develop resilience and face challenges with greater strength.

monktoncombeschool.com

New Hall School

Head: Mrs Katherine Jeffrey
Location: Essex
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 1-19 years

New Hall is one of the UK's largest independent boarding and day schools, set on a safe, 170-acre heritage campus with a London station at its gate. For girls and boys aged 1–19, its Diamond Model and Catholic values of care, trust, and respect foster a nurturing community, giving every child the best start in life.

newhallschool.co.uk

Roedean School

Head: Niamh Green
Location: East Sussex
School type: Girls, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 11-18 years

At Roedean, every girl is seen, known, and heard, thriving in an academically ambitious environment where bespoke pathways nurture individual potential. In an inspiring coastal setting, girls are empowered to think boldly, encouraged to grow with confidence, and are engaged in a global sisterhood that promotes belonging and celebrates individuality.

roedean.co.uk

Royal Russell School

Head: Chris Hutchinson
Location: Surrey
School type: Co-Ed,Prep, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 3-18 years

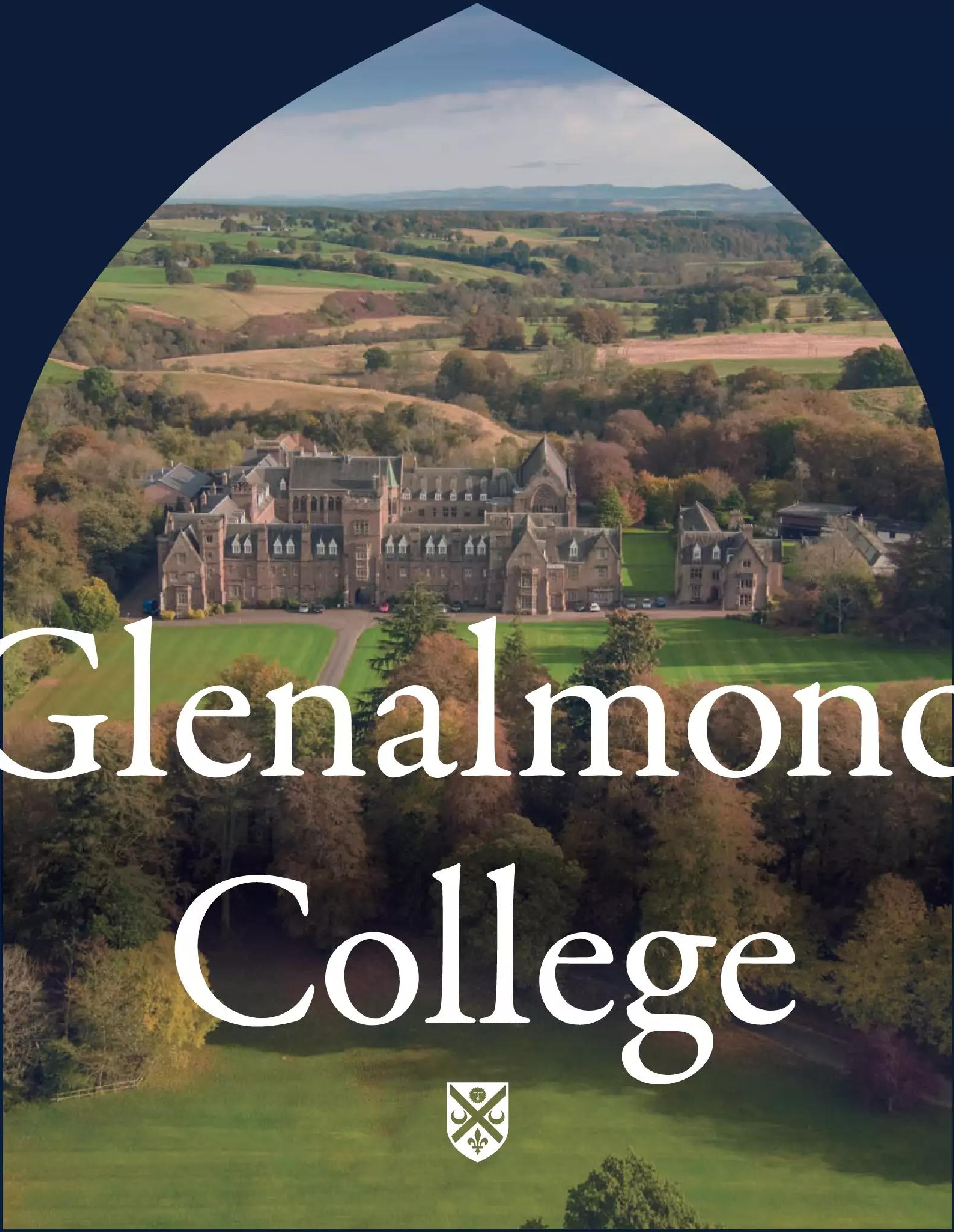
Royal Russell is different by design. We are a family school which values the things which make each of us distinctively brilliant. Our commitment to each other is to help every member of our community strive for their vision of success – to take a wider view of what their personal ambitions are. Our values speak to who we are and who we strive to be; whether you are a pupil, teacher, staff member, alumni or volunteer.

royalrussell.co.uk

Sevenoaks School

Head: Mr Jesse Elzinga
Location: Kent
School type: Co-Ed, Senior
Age range: 11-18 years

Nearly 600 years old, Sevenoaks School is one of the world's leading IB schools having taught the Diploma for nearly 50 years. While the student body is mostly British, it has a strong global outlook - the current student body includes 76 nationalities. Most students go to UK universities, with 2 in 5 of those going to Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial, LSE and UCL, but 25% head to international universities



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NEW HALL SCHOOL

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL BATH

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especually Ivy League and other top US Colleges.
sevenoaksschool.org

Strathallan School

Head: Mr Mark Lauder
Location: Perthshire
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 5- 11 years

Strathallan School combines outstanding academic opportunity with Scotland's widest range of co-curricular activities and elite level sport, all within a nurturing boarding community. Its strength lies in developing character and confidence: every pupil is encouraged to discover their talents, achieve personal excellence, and leave ready to thrive in life beyond school.
strathallan.co.uk

St Swithun's

Head: Ms Jane Gandee
Location: Hampshire
School type: Girls, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 11-18 years

Academic excellence meets a nurturing and vibrant community with a firm belief in fostering a love of learning and a spirit of curiosity. From the schools' outstanding facilities to the dedicated teaching and diverse extracurricular opportunities, St Swithun's aims to support and inspire each student to reach their fullest potential.
stswithuns.com

Taunton School

Head: Mr James Johnson
Location: Somerset
School type: Co-Ed
Age range: 0-18 years

Taunton School is the only independent school in the UK to offer four distinct Sixth Form pathways: IB, Al Levels, BTECs & International Foundation year. Our diverse student body, representing over 60 nationalities, creates a genuinely global learning environment.
tauntonschool.co.uk

The Royal School Wolverhampton

Head: Mr Tom Macdonald
Location: Staffordshire
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 11 - 18 years

Located in a leafy suburb of Wolverhampton, The Royal is conveniently situated between countryside and the UK's second largest city, Birmingham, giving pupils many opportunities to experience the rich contrasts of British life. As a State boarding School, The Royal is an attractive option for students with British passports or leave to remain in the UK.
theroyalschool.co.uk

Wycliffe College

Head: Mr Christian San Jose
Location: Gloucestershire
School type: Prep, Co-Ed, Boys, Girls, Senior, Sixth Form
Age range: 3 - 18 years

Wycliffe College nurtures individuality and confidence through a balanced education in a supportive community. With outstanding pastoral care, small class sizes, and strong academic results, pupils thrive both personally and intellectually. Our diverse opportunities in sport, arts, and leadership prepare students for life, encouraging curiosity, character, and ambition.
wycliffe.co.uk

Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Sidcot School is a co-educational British Independent Day & Boarding School for ages 11 - 18. We provide a supportive environment to help your child thrive both personally and academically. Find out more about studying at Sidcot at **www.sidcot.org.uk.**

SHORTLIST 2025
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR
·AWARDS·
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
schoolblazer

95%

of students went on to their preferred choice of university in the past academic year, including the University of the Arts London, **Cambridge**, Warwick, Manchester, and Queen Mary

Sibford

Sibford is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for children from Early Years to Sixth Form in the heart of the Oxfordshire countryside.

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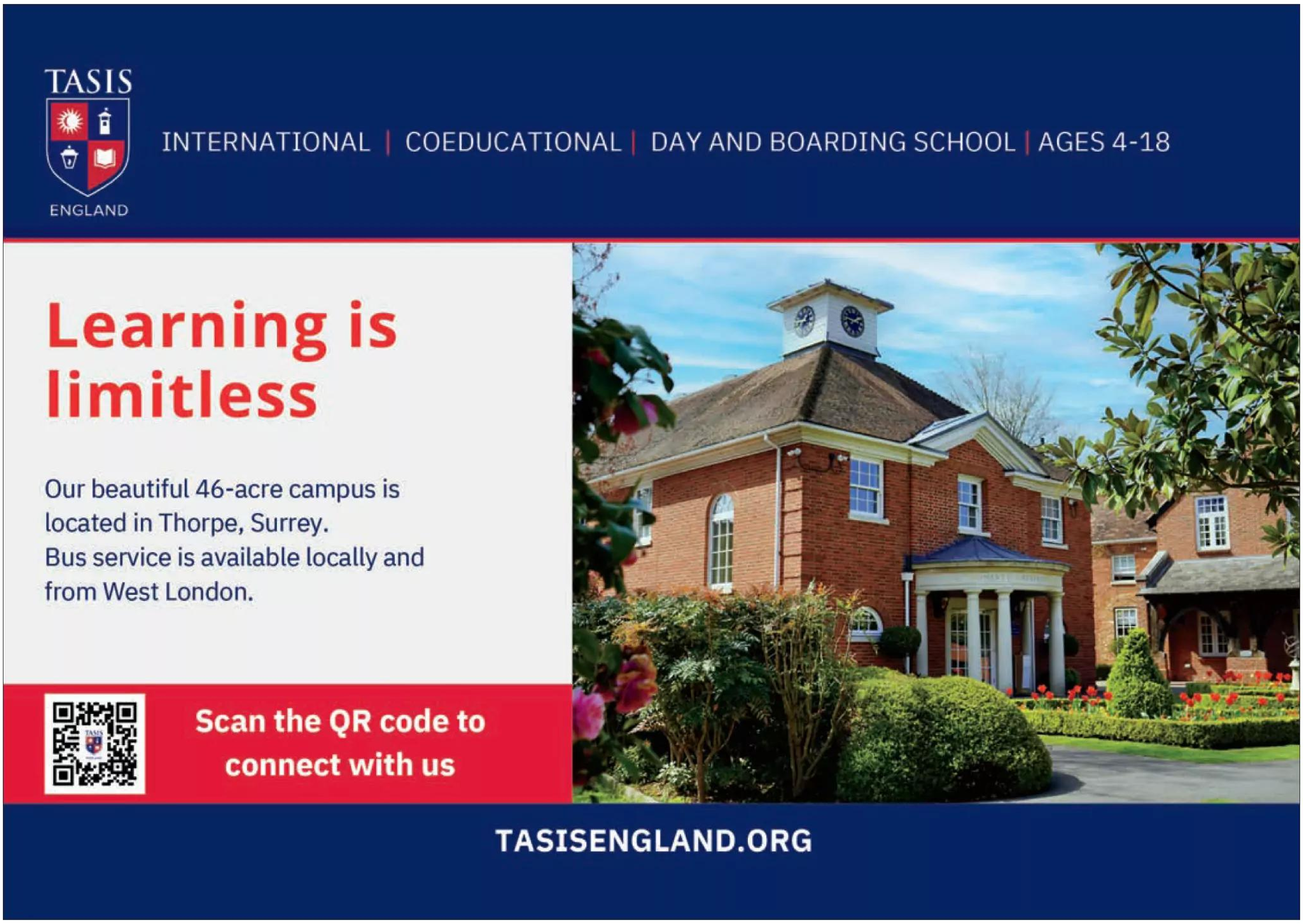
Book a visit at: sibford.org.uk/events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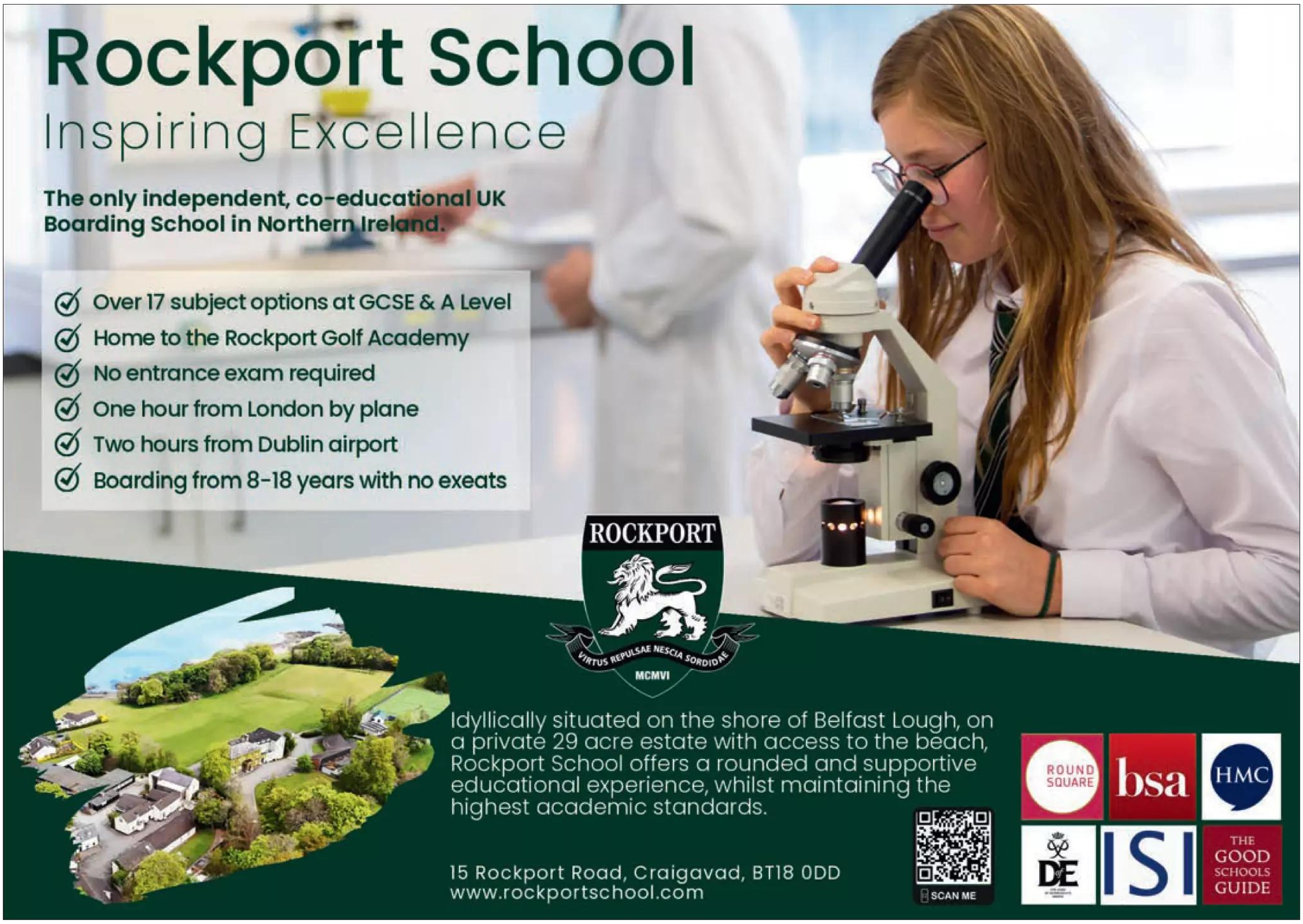

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The only independent, co-educational UK Boarding School in Northern Ireland.

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- ✓ No entrance exam required
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ROCKPORT
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Idyllically situated on the shore of Belfast Lough, on a private 29 acre estate with access to the beach, Rockport School offers a rounded and supportive educational experience, whilst maintaining the highest academic standards.

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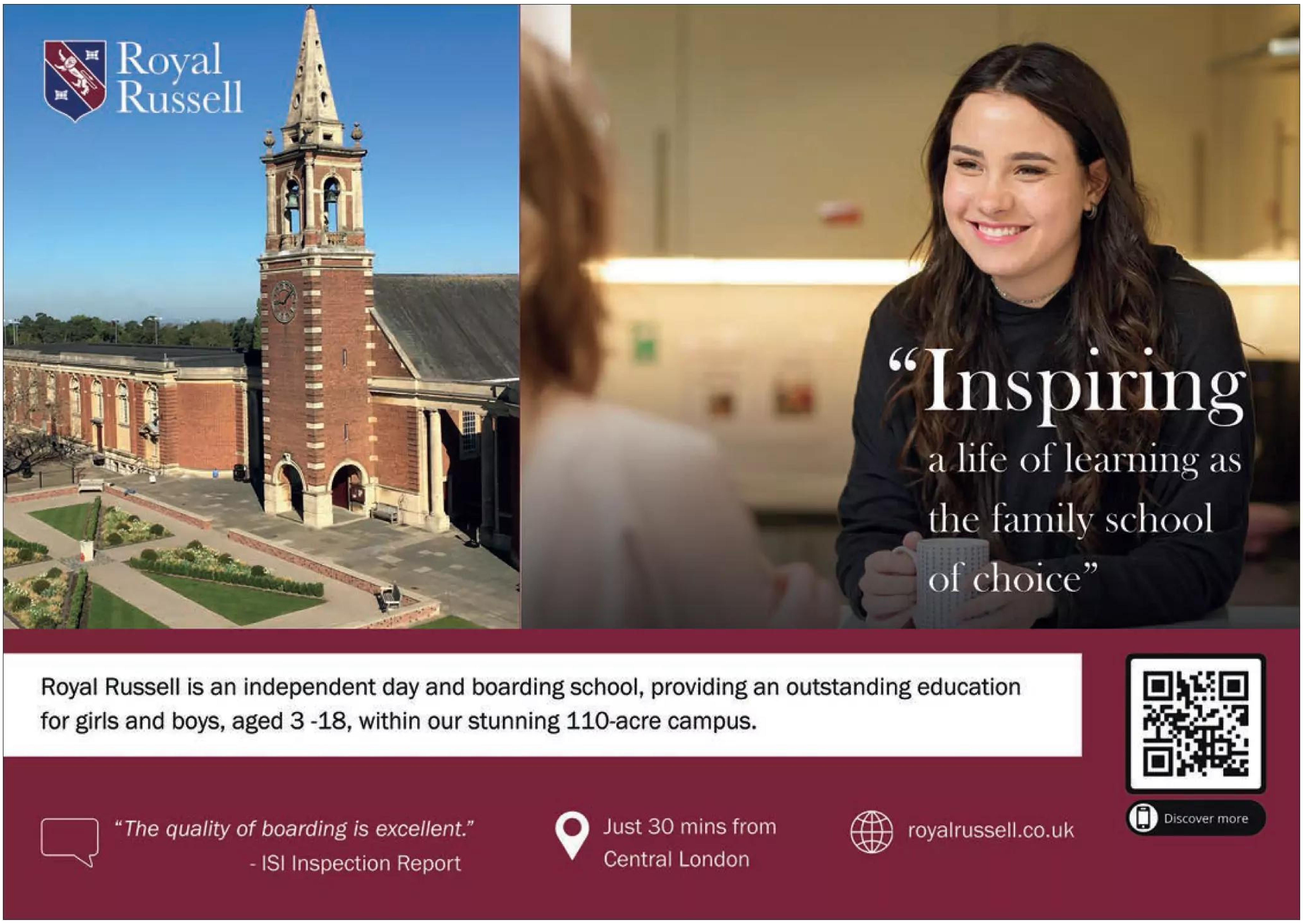

Royal Russell

“Inspiring
a life of learning as
the family school
of choice”

Royal Russell is an independent day and boarding school, providing an outstanding education for girls and boys, aged 3 -18, within our stunning 110-acre campus.

“The quality of boarding is excellent.”
- ISI Inspection Report

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Discover more

60 seconds with

Christian San José

The Headmaster of ***Wycliffe*** *on his background and educational philosophy*

What is your background?

Ⓐ I was a financial PR consultant then did officer training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. I became an officer in the Royal Green Jackets, which later became the Rifles, and served in Iraq. After leaving the military, I became a geography teacher and housemaster at a boarding school in Oxfordshire. I was there for 11 years, then moved to a school in Yorkshire as Senior Deputy Head before joining Wycliffe.

What excites you most about your role?

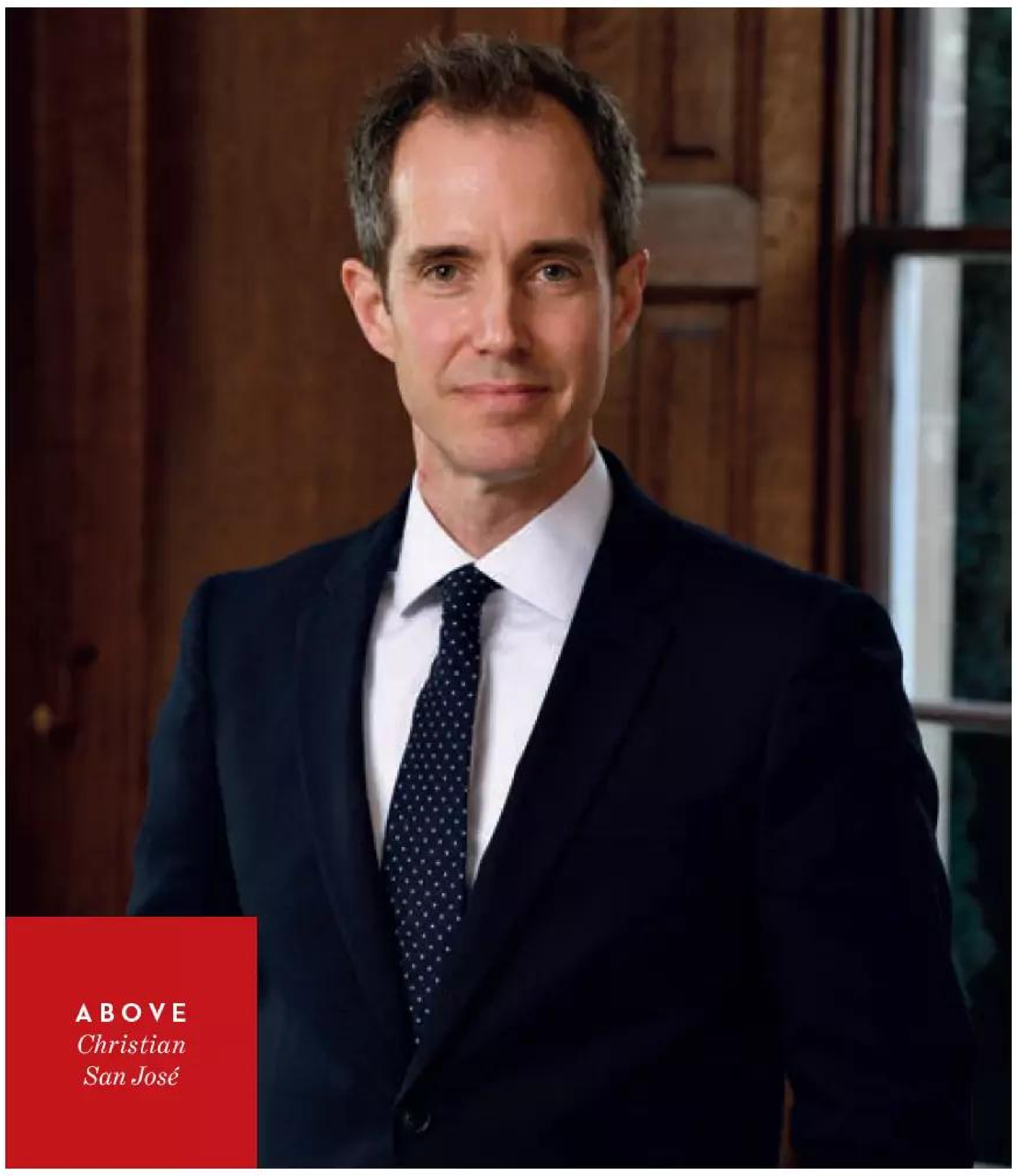
Ⓐ It's a pivotal time for independent schools and what excites me is tackling the challenges and opportunities before us head on. Wycliffe is a community which leaves no stone unturned in developing the best education for all abilities across a variety of disciplines. Opportunities are abundant here and all pupils are encouraged to have a go. Ambition for what we all can achieve – pupils and staff alike – is at the core of all we do. People have preconceptions about independent schools, but we want everyone to take a look behind our doors and see what we are doing.

What is your academic philosophy?

Ⓐ It's about developing our children before we let them out into the big wide world – providing the opportunity to see what's there and what might interest them, where they might excel. We need to take into account pupils' individual learning needs but also ensure they don't see limits to what they can do. We need to know their strengths and provide the environment to nurture those talents. It is important to keep that motivation at the centre – something which can be integral to unlocking a child's potential and setting them up for their future.

Can you tell us about one pivotal moment in your career?

Ⓐ Becoming housemaster. I enjoyed the opportunities that boarding gave me to positively influence the lives of pupils and colleagues. I've worked with inspirational leaders and Heads, all of whom demonstrated a wonderful sense of humanity and drive to do their best, and in whose footsteps I wish to follow.



ABOVE *Christian San José*

What is your school's approach and what sets it apart?

Ⓐ I love the grounded unpretentiousness, where everyone from the age of two to 19 is known and valued. What sets Wycliffe College apart is a focus on holistic development of the child. We don't set any boundaries but look at the whole person, the character of the individual, when we accept pupils. We adapt to their bespoke needs – from academic to sport, music and employability – to ensure a high level of achievement. Our pupils leave us as resilient young people who are ambitious for themselves and what they want to achieve in life.

What makes a great student?

Ⓐ Kindness, a willingness to learn and embrace difference and display unassuming confidence.

From your experience, what makes a great school environment?

Ⓐ A great school environment has experienced, innovative and caring staff combined with specialist departments and facilities that create a welcoming but also engaging and vibrant community full of opportunity. Happy children get more out of school, but a good school pushes itself to really engage children, helping them see what they are capable of. That passion, fostered early for education and growth, leads to a lifelong and inbuilt confidence and core abilities that are invaluable. Ⓔ

> **"Our pupils leave us as resilient young people with the confidence to be ambitious for themselves and what they want to achieve"**

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> *“MPW was not just a school to me but also a home where I felt comfortable being myself. I can confidently say that MPW teachers are the most eminent life mentors. They would guide and support us academically and psychologically. It would not have been possible for me to achieve anything like being the Head of the Student Council or receiving good A level results without them.”*

Julia, from South Korea, achieved A*A*A*A* at A level and progressed to UCL to read Chemical Engineering.

✉ international@mpw.ac.uk   www.mpw.ac.uk   ☎ +44 20 7835 1355